INTUITIONISM AND DAVID HUME'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Malcom Herbert MacRae

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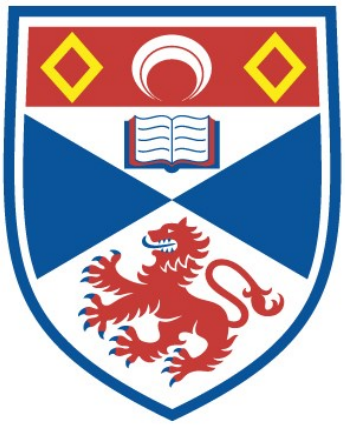

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INTUITIONISM

and

David Hume's Philosophy of Religion.

being a thesis presented in candidature
for the degree of doctor of philosophy.

Malcolm Herbert MacRae

School of Divinity,
St. Mary's College,
The University of St. Andrews,
Fife.

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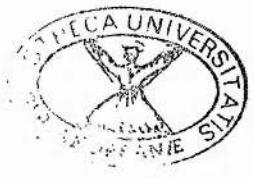

ABSTRACT

Humean philosophy has been defined in the following ways. (a) A system based on the classical influence of Cicero. (b) An attempt to offer a parallel in moral philosophy to Sir Isaac Newton's contribution to the physical sciences. (c) Intuitionism based on the Shaftesbury/Hutcheson tradition.

If we consider Hume's scholarly output as a whole, it would appear difficult to select one work and claim that it represents a definitive, final position. The approach which is taken in this study is that of following the development of Hume's thinking, from his early education through to that stage in his career which saw the completion of his major philosophical works. For a significant part of the later period of his career he broke no new ground in his philosophical studies; but was content to revise his earlier works, turning attention instead to literature, history and religious disputes.

When this approach is followed it becomes obvious that the secular interpretation of Humean philosophy, which has gained a great deal of acceptance this century, is far from convincing. Hume in fact wrote a fairly conservative work on Natural Religion. Moreover, his Intuitionism makes little sense without the religious foundation which Shaftesbury and Hutcheson had taken for granted.

What new, significant contribution did Hume make? His work can be looked upon as a fine example of 'applied philosophy', anticipating the insights of modern clinical psychology at a number of points.

It is important to see Hume as working in an educational tradition. Scottish, humanistic, Reformed. His family was Presbyterian, and the young Hume would have received a good Christian training. Although he was not considered an outstandingly bright pupil, he attended Edinburgh University at an early age, and soon developed a voracious appetite for reading scholarly literature on his own. The deeply introspective side of his philosophical studies may well have come from his Presbyterian background.

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CONTENTS

		pages
1.	Introduction	1 - 6
2.	Hume's Educational Background	7 - 22
3.	Hume's 'New Naturalistic World'	23 - 61
4.	Hutcheson's Intuitionism and Hume's	62 - 103
5.	Hume's Philosophy of Religion	104 - 178
6.	Different Approaches to Hume	179 - 205
7.	Recent Studies	206 - 218
8.	Chapter Summaries	219 - 230
9.	Bibliography	231 - 233
10.	Indices	234 - 250

INTRODUCTION.

When faced with the question - 'how should David Hume's philosophy be defined'? scholars have given quite different answers. Some have found in him the Classical thinker, influenced to the very end of his career by Cicero's ethics; others have highlighted his debt to the Intuitionism of Francis Hutcheson; and another group see in him the Newtonian philosopher, so much under the spell of Sir Isaac Newton that he aspired at one point to become 'the Newton of the moral sciences'.[1] Most scholars have accepted the view that Hume led the movement in Britain which sought to divorce the study of moral philosophy from religious belief. In support of this view they would argue that he altered what he had inherited from Christian scholars, to give it a secular slant. Many scholars would see this as the most significant feature of Hume's work, and would claim to be following him in this aim.

It has taken a long time to understand and analyse Humean philosophy. Not without reason, it has often been remarked that Hume's lucid, elegant style belies the complexity of his thought. On the surface his position appears to be straightforward, but closer study invariably reveals layer upon layer of new levels of thinking. That is why it is quite wrong to select one of his works and claim that it represents a final, definitive position. One set of works may represent best his outlook at one period in his career, whereas another a quite different standpoint at a later period in his career. To understand Hume's final and most consistent position on all the main questions which he addressed, it is essential to follow these questions as he explored them in all his works. As it will be quite impossible to understand the Hume of the Enquiry or of A Treatise of Human Nature, without understanding his home background and education, a study of these early influences is thought to be the right starting point in this examination of the claims which have been made about what he believed.

1. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Oxford at Clarendon Press, in 1980.

As we follow this approach the impression that Hume should be remembered as the secular British philosopher who sought to divorce the study of moral philosophy from religious presuppositions, begins to lose conviction. He may have set out with that intention when he wrote the Enquiry or A Treatise of Human Nature as well as other unpublished works which were considered provocative because of their secular character; but closer study of his work reveals at least two features which indicate that he was never fully happy with that position. This can be illustrated by a quotation from a letter from Sir James MacDonald writing in Paris to an English correspondent: " 'So that poor Hume,' wrote Sir James MacDonald... 'who on your side of the water was thought to have too little religion, is here thought to have too much'."[2]

Firstly, Hume's outlook was to change considerably as he travelled from the Continent back to Scotland, and as he scrutinized his earlier work more critically. He could be very frank about his disappointments, and made no attempt to conceal his uncertainty about arguments which were crucial to the secular interpretation. His position made him sceptical about so many things that he was seldom dogmatic about anything. As part of his change of outlook in mid-career, we find him, for example, settling down quite happily in Edinburgh Society. He is no longer so much at loggerheads with Christian scholars, or Ministers of the Kirk, or Anglican Bishops, Dr. Butler having everywhere recommended some of his works. It is during this period that he is willing to sit down and write about his thoughts on Natural Religion. This little-noticed work leads in fact to fairly conservative conclusions. It can hardly be described as the product of the pen of someone who has thrown overboard every religious conviction! This is a different Hume to the Hume who had complained from Paris - " 'I have been accustom'd to meet with nothing but Insults and Indignities from my native Country...' "[3]

Secondly, the theory which he espoused in Moral Philosophy and clung to throughout his life was not really all that secular at all. It was

2. Mossner op. cit. 485

3. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith. London, MacMillan and Co., in 1941. 395

the Intuitionism which had been passed on to him by Francis Hutcheson. We will consider Hume's attempt to break away from Hutcheson's spiritual Intuitionism, but the conclusion to which we are driven is that the attempt was less than completely successful. The reason why Hume became and remained for the rest of his life an Intuitionist, had nothing whatever to do with his secular tendencies. From these tendencies it would have been much more natural for him to have adopted the secular Rationalist position. Hume could not properly account for his Intuitionism. It did not, for example, grow out of his 'new naturalistic world'. The reason why he became an Intuitionist was because he inherited it from Francis Hutcheson. It could be adapted to fit in with his other views, but it was not the product of them. He chose to make it harmonize with them. And so Hume's stout defence of his Intuitionism throughout all his writings is eloquent testimony to the fact that there was always something spiritual at the centre of his thinking, for which he could not fully account.

More generally, in the philosophy of religion debate he is much less predictable than his secular interpreters would have us believe. In the debate between the Theists and the Deists, he appears to lean towards Theism. He does in fact make reference to 'true Theism'. On the status of the 'theistic proofs' as a whole, he may even have been more conservative than Kant who undermined all the arguments apart from the Moral Argument, whereas Hume, according to A.J. Ayer "...nowhere proclaims himself an atheist. On the contrary, in The Natural History of Religion and elsewhere in his writings, he professes to accept the argument from Design."[4] Hume's position in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion calls for careful definition, as can be seen in a later section. Even in his exploration of psychological questions such as - 'how we form our beliefs', it is not clearly evident that his reasoning led him to secular conclusions. The science

4. Hume. by A.J. Ayer. Published by the Oxford University Press in 1980.

of the study of man greatly excited him because he felt that it would be seen to be the foundation of all the other sciences. But as he studied this science closer he came to appreciate that 'scientific' and 'moral' questions did not fall into the same category. He was one of the first moral philosophers to insist that you cannot derive an "ought" from an "is".

There is something striking about Hume's anthropological model. If it is accepted that the Christian outlook is positive and optimistic - optimistic about life as well as about human nature - then there is much of this cheery optimist in Hume's anthropological model.

20th century admirers of Hume's philosophy, like Mossner, claim that he laid down the first "...all-inclusive Science of Human Nature," and that this science has now become the "... study of specialists in many fields."[5] The immediate objection to Mossner's claim is that Hume was not really working from a secular anthropological model at all. That is a possible objection to all the attempts that have been made to defend Hume's philosophy from a secular basis.

Did Hume's contribution to philosophy, therefore, lead to significant new advances? His general influence was substantial and important. This 'influence' is not always easy to define and Professor Passmore may be right to describe his sentimental psychology, for example, as a thing of shreds and patches.[6] Here we are reminded of what R.N. Berki said about Locke's political philosophy, when he called it a thing of shreds and patches. But then, Sir Ernest Barker's opinion[7] was that Locke's hodden grey is more to be relied upon than Rousseau's parti-coloured silk. That opinion may have an applicationwith reference to Hume's theories as well.

Despite its shaky construction and thoroughly dangerous tendencies, something survives the final examination which leads us to feel that Hume was on the right lines as he mapped out the ground for what was

5. Mossner op. cit.

6. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. London, Duckworth Press 1980.

7. Social Contract. (With an Introduction by Sir Ernest Barker) Published by the Oxford University Press in 1976.

to become the science of psychology. Where philosophy ends and psychology begins is a matter which has to be decided upon before conclusions about the significance of Hume's work can be arrived at. At the very least, his work can be looked upon as a fine example of 'applied philosophy', anticipating the insights of modern clinical psychology at a number of points.

References.

page

1. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press, in 1980. 132

2. Mossner op. cit. 485

3. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith. Published by MacMillan and Co., in 1941. 395

4. Hume. by A.J. Ayer. Published by the Oxford University Press in 1980. 23

5. Mossner op. cit. 5

6. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. London, Duckworth Press 1980. 130

7. Social Contract. (With an Introduction by Sir Ernest Barker) Published by the Oxford University Press in 1976. XXXIX

Hume's Educational Background.

David Hume grew up in Scotland during a period of significant change. Scotland was emerging out of the feudalism of the Middle Ages and fast becoming a modern, energetic nation, eager to come alongside and be on equal terms with England, her Southern neighbour. Scotland was becoming more aware of what was taking place in the wider world and wanted to be in the vanguard of progress.

The changes which were to overtake Scotland's capital Edinburgh during Hume's lifetime, were, by Scottish standards, astounding. In the Life of David Hume. Mossner traces the changes from the primitive conditions of life in the Old Town, to life in the New Town, which were gradually transforming Edinburgh into one of Europe's most beautiful capitals: truly, an Athens of the North.

But the Scotland of Hume's boyhood was also solidly Presbyterian. The proceedingsof the General Assembly had a bearing on every facet of Scottish life. Through the influence of Andrew Melville and Alexander Henderson, academic standards in the Scottish universities has risen to a level were they had become comparable with European standards. Hume enjoyed many advantages through following a Scottish education. The dourness and drabness with which Scottish Presbyterianism has sometimes been associated, may have much less to do with the inluence of Genevan Calvinism than is generally appreciated. As many Calvinistic influences came to Scotland via English Puritanism rather than directly from the Continent, it is necessary to distinguish between what grew out of the Scottish Reformation and what did not. By Hume's day the influence of English Puritanism on Scottish Presbyterianism had increased considerably, and this may explain why he was put off by the heavier devotional literature which he was expected to read on the Sabbath. It could be that the popular image of Scottish Presbyterianism has as much to do

with the Scottish character and climate as with the teachings of John Calvin!

Genevan Calvinism was, for example, much more open to European humanism than either Roman or Lutheran scholarship. Roman scholarship had been so thirlled to Aristotelian philosophy that Galileo was forced to withdraw his claim that the earth was not the centre of our universe. The pietistic emphasis which pervaded the Lutheran outlook left it with a legacy of hostility to human reason. Lutheranism seemed to create a dichotomy between faith and reason which left many areas of study under suspicion. Whereas Reformed humanism, which Calvin represented best, as he, of all the Reformers had the the most thorough humanist education; could rightly be described as one of the most enlightened movements of this period. That is why it is not unreasonable to claim that much of Hume's work, despite its originality, could have come from other pens in the Scotland of the 18th. century, because he was working in a particular tradition and following through an already established method. Much of his work was not original at all, as Norman Kemp Smith has shown in The Philosophy of David Hume., in which he indicates Francis Hutcheson's inluence on Hume's decision to become an Intuitionist.

So that, alongside Reformed scholasticism which held to a high view of scholarship, a more pietistic interpretation of Calvinism had permeated into Scottish Presbyterianism through popular devotional writers. It held to a very different view of the value of scholarship. MacIntyre draws attention to the strictures to which Hume would have been subject during a typical Scottish Sabbath, during which he would have been expected to read works such as Boston's Human Nature in the Fourfold State.

In The Life of David Hume. Mossner shows in some detail how seriously

the Hume family took their faith. Mrs. Hume was probably evangelical and pietistic. David was "...'religious when he was young'..." "Taking his religion unusually seriously, the young David Hume was attracted to the task of soul-searching." But Mrs. Hume also believed in giving her family every opportunity to do well in their education, stimulating her children to study diligently on their own, and to that end she provided them with a good library. David was considered a bit slow. It is possible that he did not show much outward enthusiasm for what he was reading. There was also a deeply introspective side to him. Only much later in his career did it become apparent how much he had read: "The boy David Hume was, it is clear, already beginning to think for himself and to deem moral issues of paramount importance..."[1] It is not possible to get away from the impression that the deep introspection which was to characterize his mature work as a moral philosopher, came from his Presbyterian upbringing with its strong emphasis on soul-searching. This can be seen from the expression he used, such as, "...When I turn my eye inward..."[2] From having read dutifully the devotional literature which was used on the Sabbath and his school text-books, David Hume, the youthful undergraduate, began to develop a voracious appetite for scholarly literature from every period and background. "Edinburgh was undoubtedly seething with new ideas of science, philosophy and literature..."[3] It had now become a stimulating centre.

Mossner claims that Hume gave up religion, "...slowly, and reluctantly and even against his will..."[4] Hume himself attributed his doubts to his reading of Locke and Clarke.[5] This change of outlook affected his ethical standards, as he confessed to Frances Hutcheson, "...I desire to take my Catalogue of Virtues from Cicero's Offices..."[6]

The influence of French scepticism and Hume's contact with France is an important piece of the jig-saw. It may have been that the close

1. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press in 1980. page 34
2. Mossner op. cit. 115
3. " " " 41
4. " " " 64
5. " " " 597
6. " " " 64

relationship between Scotland and France over many centuries had the effect of making the young students of Hume's generation more open to the French influence. Although his spoken French was not impressive, as a gifted linguist, he would have had little difficulty in understanding French philosophical writings. In Hume's Intentions Passmore claims that the writings of Laird and Kemp Smith have shown that Hume's matter as well as his tone was infected by French influence, "...his borrowings from Malebranche and Pierre Bayle were conspicuous and substantial."[7]

But Hume also read British empiricists such as Locke, Berkeley and Newton, who had held on to their religious beliefs and wrote as convinced Christians. He was aware of that and took their arguments into account. Later, on the Continent, he was to acquire a new respect for the apologetics of some Roman Catholic scholars, especially the Jesuits. This must have counteracted the influence of sceptics such as Pierre Bayle, and circles of atheists which were becoming quite common on the Continent.

Although Hume worked on the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion right up until the end of his life and attached great significance to their publication - as if to indicate that they represented his mature defence of his scepticism, his lifelong and 'incurable' scepticism - it is at least significant that, in them, he attacks the fashionable Deism which was held by people like the petulant Mrs. Mallet, who, "...meeting him one night at an assembly, boldly accosted with these words - 'Mr. Hume, Give me leave to introduce myself to you. We Deists ought to know each other'. - 'Madam', replied he, 'I am no Deist. I do na style myself so, neither do I desire to be known by that Appelation'."[8] His own religious education had been in Theism and among Christian apologists, he respected most Theists such as Butler and Berkeley. Greig refers to an account of Hume at another social evening in this connection, which is crucial to this point:-

7. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. London, the Duckworth Press 1980. 86

8. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith London, the MacMillan Press, in 1941. 395

> "Once Hume was din.ing at the Baron's, and the conversation turned to Atheism - not an uncommon topic there. The guileless David made his contribution. He had met Deists, plenty of them; he might agree to be called one himslef, though upon the whole, if he must be called something, Theist was a better designation; but as for Atheist, he really didn't believe that they existed. At any rate, he had yet to meet one. Atheism - why, they might remember that in this connection Bacon said ... But he was interrupted by the laughter of the other guests. 'My dear David!' cried Baron. 'Never seen an Atheist! Look about you. Here are fifteen around the table'."[9]

After this experience Hume was by no means consistent in holding to the view that atheists don't exist, indeed, some of his own writings became deeply agnostic in character; but his earlier attitude to atheism cannot be ignored because it continued to be a persistent and significant influence on his work throughout his career. Nor was he comfortable with his scepticism and where it often led him.

> "It is well known from Hume's testimony that he was driven by the analytic spirit into scepticism - 'the barren rock', he calls it - where he is reduced 'almost to despair' upon realizing 'the impossibility of amending or correcting the wretched condition, weakness and disorder of the faculties'."[10]

That is why we sometimes see Hume reacting to that experience by breaking off from that area of study completely for a while, or escaping from the difficulties by seeking the company of his friends. His scepticism produced very strange feelings in him at times, and the way in which he describes them is similar to what Helen Gardner wrote in the Tragedy of Damnation about Marlowe's Doctor Faustus:-

> "From a proud philosopher, master of all human knowledge, to a

9. David Hume. by J.Y.T. Greig. London, by Jonathan Cape in 1934. 298

10. Hume's Philosophical Development. by J. Noxon. Published by the Oxford Press 1973. 7

a trickster, to a slave of phantoms, to a cowering wretch: that is a brief sketh of Dr. Faustus."[11]

The parallel with Dr. Faustus is not of course to be pressed too strongly, but Hume's progress did at times make him look undignified. Rushing one moment to be the first to take up a new, daring position; then, at another, through the difficulties encountered defending it, retreating in confusion to a suspension of what he had previously affirmed.

"...'I fancy myself some strange uncouth monster'..."[12]

"...'Fain wou'd I run into the crowd for shelter and warmth'..."[13]

" 'I have exposed myself to the enmity of all metaphysicians, logicians, mathematicians, and even theologians'..."[14]

" 'When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance'. "[15]

As a pioneering philosopher Hume was to experience all the hazzards associated with championing new, controversial ideas. He was living at a time of momentous change. In Scotland the tensions between the older Presbyterian attitudes and the new European outlook were enormous. Hume's mind became the battleground. It took a long time before his critics began to appreciate the validity of much of what he was saying. And yet, as scholars began to analyse his work a clear shift in outlook did take place. One of thechanges which must have pleased him most in the later part of his career was to see his earlier controversial works hailed as among the finest writings of his age.

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Hume's development as an original philosopher began with the discovery of key philosophical works from different periods. It would appear that

11. Doctor Faustus, by C. Marlowe. London, New Mermaids Benn Press in 1965. XXI
12. Mossner op. cit. 115
13. " " " 115
14. " " " 115
15. " " " "

he began to read widely on his own from an early period. It is not hard to identify which writings had the greatest influence on him. The decisive influence of one of his contemporaries, Francis Hutcheson, has been mentioned already. There was also a major classical vein running through his thinking. When we examine Hume's later position, as represented for example by his insistence that the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. should be published after his death, we are reminded of the enduring influence of his classical mentor - Cicero. He always referred to Cicero with the greatest respect. As Peter Jones observes, "Philosophically, his beginnings are rooted in the scepticism, naturalism and rhetorical method of Cicero..."

> "Every educated reader could discern at the time of its posthumous publication, that Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. was modelled on Cicero's De Natura Deorum. Most readers, no doubt, could also discern the Ciceronian influence on the earlier Natural History of Religion. ..." [16]

Peter Jones claims that there are four general theses of Cicero which Hume was happy to adopt.

> " 1. Insistence on the social dimension of man, and recognition of its importance as a necessary condition of stability and coherence in the political realm.
>
> 2. Recognition that we should seek to live in harmony with nature, and that honestum and moderatio ought to form the core of morality;
>
> 3. The adoption of moderate scepticism only, and rejection of extreme scepticism as incompatible with a practical life, and as indicative of egoism;
>
> 4. Insistence on the causal principle, together with a rejection of fate, chance, divination; and an attitude of scepticism towards philosophical theology and most religious practices." [17]

16. Hume's Sentiments. by Peter Jones. Published by the Edinburgh University Press, in 1982. 29

17. Jones op. cit. 30

The influence of Cicero, according to Jones, is to be found in Hume's earliest essays. In France writers such as Fontenelle and Bayle had already accepted Cicero's position, and in Britain it had been accepted by the Deists and others such as Shaftesbury. It was from Cicero that Hume was able to reconcile the study of philosophy with the demands of life in the real world.

Although not a rationalist, Hume had been following with interest the effect which Newton's ideas having on the philosophical study of 'how the physical universe works'. Hume's interest in Newton's work is of the greatest importance, because Newton was a scientist. Like Galileo, Newton was engaged in a branch of science which was increasingly distancing itself from theological and philosophical presuppositions. They had both challenged the Church's traditional teaching about the universe, and they were undermining much of Aristotelian philosophy on the question of causation. Aristotelian philosophy had always been much more empirical than Platonism, but now that scientists were discovering natural forces and following the movement of the planets with accuracy, Aristotelian first principles were seen to be unsound. This was posing a dilemma for philosophers, because if philosophy could not lead them to a sound understanding of first principles, then the scientists would soon take their place in offering a defensible view of the world. This dilemma comes across very clearly in a passage from the Enquiry into Human Understanding. -

> "But may we not hope, that philosophy, if cultivated with care... may carry its resources still farther, and discover, at least in some degree, the secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is activated in its operations? Astronomers had long contented themselves with proving, from the phenomena, the true motions, order, and magnitude of the heavenly bodies: Till a philosopher, at last, arose, who seems, from the happiest reasonings,

> to have determined the laws and forces, by which the revolutions of the planets are governed and directed. The like has been performed with regard to other parts of nature. And there is no reason to despair of equal success in our enquiries." 18

Although Hume refers to Newton as a 'philosopher' in that passage, in today's language we would call him a scientist. In some ways the work of the philosopher was considered to cover most branches of learning, and to be one required the ability to demonstrate this knowledge in the development of ideas, however speculative. As we now know, many of these ideas were of a speculative nature. That is why Hume felt that what Newton had demonstrated from the physical universe had an application in the understanding of human nature as well. At this time the distinction between moral philosophy and empirical psychology was not at all clear. 'The study of the human body' Hume may have felt, was the way to understand human nature.

> "Not only is there an explanation for everything which happens, but these explanations are, when properly understood, capable of forming a 'complete system of the sciences'." 19

This approach may have led him to believe that some physical method would be found to account for the way in which we form our beliefs. Some see the 'principle of the transfer of vivacity' as being an analougue for Newton's notion of the 'transfer of momentum'. We get a flavour of this kind of approach in the Treatise where Hume writes:-

> "...whenany impression becomes present to us, it not only transports the mind to such ideas as are related to it, but likewise communicates to them a share of its force and vivacity." 20

These possibilities were never pursued with much thoroughness, for a reason which is again supplied in the Treatise:-

18. Enquiry into Human Understanding. by David Hume. (As quoted in David Hume by N. Capaldi, Twayne Publishers, Boston Mass., 1975 p14

19. A Treatise of Human Nature. by David Hume. (As quoted in David Hume by N. Capaldi.) p. 38

20. Treatise op. cit. p. 90

> "...as these depend on natural and physical causes, the examination of them would lead me too far from my present subject, into the sciences of anatomy and natural philosophy."[21]

From Ockham, Hume adopted a theory of common sense which in a British context laid the foundation for the Scottish school of common sense, and later linguistic philosophy. Ockham along with Malebranche had challenged the Aristotelian doctrine of 'necessary connection'. Instead they argued that divine omnipotence should be able to do everything. But, the Newtonian conception of causation was to challenge fundamentally the physics on which much of medieval theology had been built.

As Hume reflected on the relevance of Newtonian 'philosophy' to the new study of human nature which he was endeavouring to pioneer, it became increasingly clear to him that the 'study of the human body' could only yield a certain type of information. From this study it would be quite impossible to account for many of our beliefs. We know that he saw this difficulty very clearly because he was one of the first philosophers to explain the meaning of the 'naturalistic fallacy'. 'You can't derive an ought from an is' is what he was now insisting, and while that assertion can be challenged on the basis of a different ontology, on the basis of Hume's it could not. Hume's distinction on this question has proved helpful in the study of moral philosophy, down to the present time.

In fact Hume's early approach lacked what Kant was to make provision for in his moral theory. A Categorical Imperative. Kant's starting-point was different. He did not attempt to begin to explain human nature by studying the human body. Instead, he saw the necessity for moral imperatives which could only be understood and accounted for against the background of human society, with all its customs and institutions and its moral codes. In Kant this more spiritual side of human beliefs is at the very forefront of his philosophy. From his own ontology Hume

21. David Hume: the Newtonian Philosopher by N. Capaldi. Boston, Mass. Twayne publishes, in 1975.

knew that he could not supply the 'oughts' which would give impetus to moral principles. On its own, any analogue of Newton's understanding of how the forces which govern the universe work, could not supply an answer to moral questions. If it was Hume's intention to 'become a Newton of the moral sciences', then there must have come a point when he realized that the attempt had failed. The whole enterprise had been misconcieved, because it was just not possible to be 'a Newton of the moral sciences'.

Now we see that the Intuitionism which Francis Hutcheson had passed on to him, was of vital importance to him. If the empirical sciences could not yield a satisfactory moral theory, then, human nature itself, in all its essential feelings and insights would. There can be little doubt that this is what Hume believed, so that increasingly in his writings he took it for granted that human intuitions are the source of our moral convictions.

Francis Hutcheson succeeded Gershom Carmichael to the Chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University in 1729. Hutcheson taught and wrote as a convinced Intuitionist. "Central to Hutcheson's philosophy was the confidence which he places in human nature."[22] T.D. Campbell describes Hutchison as the 'father' of the Scottish Enlightenment. Campbell goes on to argue that Hume's ethics were largely Hutchesonian, and he is prepared to side with Kemp Smith when he argues that "Hutcheson's sentimentalist approach to moral theory was the inspiration for Hume's entire epistemology."[23] According to Campbell, Hutcheson did much of the spadework which prepared the way for the next generation of Scottish philosophers.

> "While none of the followers of Hutcheson can properly be called his disciples, since each endeavours to provide a comprehensive and to an extent novel philosophy of his own, a knowledge of Hutcheson's pioneering work in turning the insights of

22. Scottish Enlightenment. Edited by T.D. Campbell and A.S. Skinner. Edinburgh J. Donalson, in 1982. 122

23. Scottish Enlightenment op. cit. 167

> Shaftesbury into a developed and cohesive philosophy of practice does enable us to see their achievements in perspective. Hutcheson's work, both in his writing and teaching, provided an attractive model, adopted by many subsequent Scottish literati, which provides a backcloth for any adequate view of their later contributions."[24]

It is worth noting that Hutcheson's political philosophy was capable of a radical interpretation which was not necessarily typical of the Scottish character. It may have been that he was endeavouring to sow the seeds of a novel approach to politics, much closer to Locke's ideas than those held by the Erastians.

> "Hutcheson argues that men are capable of disinterested love, or the desire of, or delight in, the Good of others. His chief concern is to demonstrate against Hobbes and Mandeville that this 'public affection' cannot ultimately be for the benefit of the benevolent person gets from seeing others happy, since such pleasure presupposes a prior desire that they be happy."[25]

There can be little doubt that Hutcheson was a Theist. Mary Shaw Kuypers refers to him as the prophet of the Moderate Ministers in the Church of Scotland of his day, which means that we can fairly conclude that he would have challenged the strictures of the strict Presbyterian code; but he had not been swept into the camp of the fashionable Deism which was gaining ground in England. His 'Intuitionism' still relied on the Revealed Religion of Theism. The third Earl of Shaftesbury, who was responsible for popularizing Intuitionism, was much more open to Deism, although even that claim must be modified, because, he remained a devout member of the Church of England, receiving Communion three to four times a year. His then was no ordinary Deism. He was undoubtedly opposed to religious fanaticism, but his 'Deism' was so sympathetic to much of Christian teaching that it must have been

24. Scottish Enlightenment. Edited by T.D. Campbell and A.S. Skinner. Edinburgh J. Donalson, in 1982. 167

25. Scottish Enlightenment op. cit. 168

adapted to fit in with the doctrines of the Church of England. If it is at all true that Newton's influence was opening the door for a Deism which would hold to a mechanistic view of the universe, Shaftesbury's influence was transforming "...the metamorphosed God the watchmaker into God the Artist."[26]

There are many parallels between Shaftesbury's and Rousseau's ideas. The full extent of Shaftesbury's influence on Rousseau may not be known, but it must have been crucial. "Since Rousseau believed with Shaftesbury that 'the perfection and height of virtue must be owing to a belief in God, Emile, like Shaftesbury's Philocles in The Moralist must be given a deity, for he must have an ideal after which he can model his own life."[27] Moreover, "Emile's God like that of Shaftesbury will be supremely good, supremely intelligent, all-powerful, and all-just."[28]

Shaftesbury's religious view of the world is like that of Leibniz: it is optimistic. This is the best of all possible worlds. What is true of the world is true of human nature. "If all human beings are born good, and are equipped with the natural instincts of self-preservation, sympathy and a sense of beauty, how can moral evil exist in the universe?"[29] But Hume would have insisted that evil does exist in the universe and we must account for it. That is one of the central questions which is debated in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Shaftesbury seemed to just sweep this whole question aside:-

> "It has been said of Spinoza that he was intoxicated with the idea of God. It might be said with equal truth of Shaftesbury that he was intoxicated with the idea of virtue, and Virtue with him meant, above all things, benevolence and care for others.
>
> Nor was Shaftesbury's benevolence simply of a private character. Though the asthma from which he suffered prevented him from appearing much in Parliament, he was always interested in public

26. Shaftesbury and the French Deists. by Dorothy B. Schlegel. Published by the University of North Carolina in 1956 6

27. Schlegel op. cit. 109

28. " " " 109

29. " " " 109

affairs, and ready to sacrifice to what he deemed the public interest of his time, his money and even his health."[30]

His Deity was 'Supreme Goodness'. This belief shaped his ethical theory. His was a system made up of ideals. These included 'Benevolence, Moral Beauty, and a Moral Sense'. Each individual person could also be part of this system as these ideals were adopted.

Shaftesbury's theory then, contrasts markedly with Hobbes' attempt to build up a system of morality which rested on the selfish feelings, or with Mandeville's view that "...because our virtues took their rise in selfish or brutal forms, they are still brutality and selfishness in masquerade."[31] Hobbes and Mandeville emphasized the negative side of human nature, whereas Shaftesbury the positive side. We will find Hume agreeing with Shaftesbury about the importance of giving a central place to the good qualities which we see in people, but he does not ignore their bad or even dark qualities either. It is through his ethical theory that we discover the nature of Shaftesbury's religion:-

"...in the incentives to well-doing and the deterrents from evil-doing are to be sought not solely, or even mainly, in the opinion of mankind, or in the rewards and punishments of the magistrate, or in the hopes and terrors of a future world, but in the answer of a good conscience, approving virtue and disapproving vice, and the love of God, who by his infinite wisdom and his all-embracing beneficence, is worthy of the love and admiration of His creature."[32]

From Shaftesbury this spiritual Intuitionism passed to Hutcheson and from Hutcheson to Hume and from Hume to Bentham. Central to this theory is a trust in human instincts at their noblest and a concern for the common good. This latter, according to Fowler, lies more on the surface in Cumberland and seems to be implied in the ethical speculations of Bacon. (Fowler: op. cit. p. 163)

30. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. (English Philosophers) by T. Fowler. London, Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington in 1882. 37

31. Fowler op. cit. 141

32. " " " 101

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page

1. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press in 1980. 34

2. Mossner op. cit. 115

3. " " " 41

4. " " " 64

5. " " " 597

6. " " " 64

7. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. London, the Duckworth Press 1980. 86

8. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith London, the MacMillan Press, in 1941. 395

9. David Hume. by J.Y.T. Greig. London, by Jonathan Cape in 1934. 298

10. Hume's Philosophical Development. by J. Noxon. Published by the Oxford Press 1973. 7

11. Doctor Faustus. by C. Marlowe. London, the New Mermaids Benn Press in 1965. XXI

12. Mossner op. cit. 115

13. " " " 115

14. " " " 115

15. " " " 115

16. Hume's Sentiments. by Peter Jones. Published by the Edinburgh University Press, in 1982. 29

17. Jones op. cit. 30

18. Enquiry into Human Understanding. by David Hume. (As quoted in David Hume by N. Capaldi, Twayne Publishers, Boston Mass., 1975) p14

19. A Treatise of Human Nature. by David Hume. (As quoted in David Hume by N. Capaldi.) p. 38

20. Treatise op. cit. p. 90

21. " " " p. 92

22. Scottish Enlightenment. Edited by T.D. Campbell and A.S. Skinner. Edinburgh. J. Donalson, in 1982. 122

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24. " " " " 167

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	page
26. Shaftesbury and the French Deists. by Dorothy B. Schlegel. Published by the University of North Carolina in 1956	6
27. Schlegel op. cit.	109
28. " " "	109
29. " " "	109
30. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. (English Philosophers) by T. Fowler. London, Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington in 1882.	37
31. Fowler op. cit.	141
32. Fowler op. cit.	101

Hume's New Naturalistic World.

Hume's educational development took place at a time when the application of science was having an effect on every facet of life. No longer was the philosopher to be allowed to argue a priori from inherited Aristotelian or any other philosophical principles about the order of the physical universe, because science was now offering a very different explanation. Even man himself was part of this scientific enquiry. The science of Anatomy was demonstrating with increasing accuracy how different parts of the human body work. The human body which until this time had been held to be so mysterious that only theologians or philosophers could explain its constitution, was now being seen to be a physiological structure superficially not dissimilar to other animals such as mammals. For some, science now held the answer to everything; and, because of that was hailed as a new religion. Although the 18th. century was not the century of the Industrial Revolution, that revolution was now only round the corner. The "...practical benefits of the new science had been constantly stressed by Bacon, Descartes, and Spinoza, and had already been demonstrated in mining, medicine, and metallurgy, in the arts of warfare, navigation, and architecture."[1] Where was this new approach going to lead? From Locke, Shaftesbury, Mandeville, Hutcheson and Butler, Hume found the example of the new approach: the approach which sought to "... put the science of man on a new footing ..."[2] But Hume knew straight away that this would create a difficulty, because science has nothing to say to us about moral issues. As a philosopher who deemed moral issues to be of the highest importance, he knew that his task would be to work out how 'the science of man' relates to moral philosophy. His attempt, therefore, would be to "...introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects."[3] And that general aim sums up for us what Hume at this point set out to achieve.

At first he was supremely optimistic. Beginning with his elementary

1. Hume's Philosophical Development. by J. Noxon. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press in 1973. page 32

2. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Published by the Oxford Press in 1973. 74

3. Mossner op. cit. 32

understanding of what was being discovered through scientific research, he jumped to the conclusion that a scientific understanding of the workings of the human body would finally explain all the mysteries of human knowledge and belief.

> "From the beginning he was equally concerned with determining the lawful limits of human knowledge and belief with understanding human preferences, relationships and institutions. He started with the conviction that experimental psychology would yield a theory of human nature from which solutions to the problems of epistemology and of aesthetics, ethics, and politics could all be derived."[4]

Was he then becoming a hard-headed rationalist? Indeed not. According to Noxon he was becoming part of the critical "...reaction that had already displaced Descartes in favour of Locke and Newton at home."[5] From cogito, ergo sum Descartes had started to build "...with supreme confidence in pure reason."[6] Hume, however, was to reject the concept of the pure objectivity of logical thinking. He was to begin with a theory of human nature which would be the basis for the moral sciences, and which, according to Noxon, would serve as a foundation for an empirical "...science of man."[7]

> "Hume tells us that 'the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences' that 'Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and Natural Religion,' are in some measure dependent on the 'science of man', and that those sciences 'which more intimately concern human life' can be mastered only after we have taken command of the science of man."[8]
>
> "He undertakes to do this by genetic inquiry, supposing, as a good Lockian would, that if he can discover how men do in fact acquire knowledge and belief he will be able to show which objects and methods conform to the natural principles of human understanding

4. Noxon op. cit. 1
5. " " " 2
6. " " " 2
7. Mossner op. cit. 74
8. Noxon op. cit. 3

> and which do not. It seems that Hume originally conceived this problem as one of empirical psychology to be resolved by an adaption of the experimental method, to which he was reputedly attracted through his admiration for Newton."[9]

Noxon raises the question of how far Hume's philosophy was 'shaped by Newtonianism', but, as Newton was a Theist, this creates problems for Noxon's interpretation. Noxon is prepared to admit that Newton had a profound influence on Hume, even on questions such as the Christian argument from Design.

> "What Newton had contributed to this venerable proof - the one of Aquinas's Five Ways anticipated as far back as Anaxagoras - was the strengthening of the major premiss. Evidence of design must have impressed the earliest disinterested observer of the natural order."[10]

Noxon appreciates that this admission has created a difficulty for his own interpretation of Hume's attitude to the Theistic proofs, and so he asks, 'Hume accepts the premiss, but questions the inference' (this claim can be challenged by some very clear statements which appear in his later works), Noxon continues, 'Does he, then, merit his reputation as a Newtonian methodologist'? The difficulty is of Noxon's own making, because he has committed himself to one interpretation of Hume's attitude to the Theistic proofs. If we examine all Hume's writings on this question we will discover that he left open the door for the religious inference which Newton was seeking to draw from the Design argument. Noxon concludes this discussion by making the unfortunate claim that:-

> "...in the end it was Hume who held consistently to the basic methological principle. Newton and his followers were prepared to relax their standards in order to accommodate the religious hypothesis."[11]

It may be convenient for Noxon to argue that view in order to defend his own interpretation, but it is factually incorrect. In his Natural History of Religion Hume writes:- "The whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion. " (p.25 London, Oxford at the Clarendon Press 1976)

9. Noxon op. cit. 6
10. " " " 66
11. " " " 100

Not all that Newton propounded has stood the test of time, and Eistein for example, has advanced views of the universe which are fundamentally different. From a theological point of view, Professor T.F. Torrance has shown that Newton's theories in any case opened the door for Deism. But what is not in doubt is that Newton argued as a convinced and devout Christian that 'the heavens declare the glory of God'.[12]

At a time when the case for the argument from Design was breaking on the 18th. century world in ever greater wonder as a result of the study of physics and astronomy, highlighting the amazing design present in the Creation, it was only to be expected that many were to share Newton's faith in the argument from Design. If the discovery that the earth was not the centre of the universe had overthrown one cherished religious inference from the study of the planets, then the clockwork precision of the movement of the planets themselves as seen through the early telescopes, must have strengthened another. Newton's Christian faith had not been the product of a closed mind, but of one of the most eminent of scientists of the 18th. century. Hume was keenly aware of this. Newton was a master in a field which was not his. Hume's tribute to Newton is one of the most fulsome we will find him making to any thinker of his age:-

> "In Newton this Island may boast of having produced the greatest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of the species. Cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded on experiment; but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new or unusual; from modesty ignorant of his superiority above the rest of mankind; and thence less careful to accommodate his reasonings to common apprehensions: more anxious to merit than acquire fame: he was, from these causes, long unknown to the world."[13]

12. Space, Time and the Incarnation. by T. Torrance. Published by the Oxford University Press in 1969. 40

13. The History of England. by David Hume. (As quoted by Noxon in Hume's Philosophical Development). 71

In spite of the fact that he had not answered the most important questions which were vital to this new cosmology which he was contemplating - this new naturalistic world - Hume strode forward with boundless optimism, convinced that finally all the pieces would fit. We will now follow in greater detail what became of this attempt.

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The 18th. century was a time when a number of crucial distinctions between philosophy and the sciences were being understood. The older approach in philosophy had been to bring every branch of learning under one umbrella. The ancient philosophers strove to achieve an integrated and all-embracing philosophy of life. By the eighteenth century it was being appreciated that one person could not achieve a complete command of every branch of learning. The study of psychology on a proper scientific basis, for example, was creating major difficulties for moral philosophers like Hume. The tension between philosophy and psychology has continued from Hume's time to the present day. Some philosophers make a point of maintaining a clear distinction between philosophy and psychology. Some accuse Hume of having become a psychologist. Others defend him from the charge. In some ways the debate is finely balanced, because he was often straddling the border between them. His approach would have been the older philosophical one, which saw little need for any clear distinction, but for some 20th. century philosophers the distinction has come to assume a very great significance.

There can be little doubt that Hume at first entertained the conviction that psychology would throw up much valuable information which would be of relevance in the study of moral philosophy. But this interest should not be over-stressed. Bricke's opinion that Hume's "..brand of scepticism commits him to the plain man's metaphysics..." "...with a tincture of experimental science"[14] gets it about right. There is no

14. Hume's Philosophy of the Mind. by J. Bricke. Published by the Edinburgh University Press in 1980.

evidence that he showed any deep interest in the fine details of any empirical science. The contrast between Newton and Hume is quite clear. The division between science and philosophy was now so definite that we can call Newton a scientist and Hume a philosopher. Psychology at this stage was in its infancy. It was part science and part philosophy. In this field there was little appreciation of the need to preserve a distinction between the two. That is why there is today so much controversy over whether Hume should be regarded as a pioneering psychologist or a traditional philosopher. Noxon argues in favour of the latter:-

> "But psychological theory is not, I shall argue against prevailing criticism in part IV, the basis of his philosophical analysis, nor even an integral part of it. Psychological explanations of conceptual confusion are subsidiary to the analysis of philosophical terms..."[15]

Some philosophers are very jealous of their own province and refuse to entertain any suggestion of overlap with other disciplines. In:-

> "Language, Truth and Logic, with explicit reference to Hume A.J. Ayer proclaims that 'the discussion of psychological questions is out of place in a philosophical enquiry'."[16]

Passmore does accuse Hume directly of reducing philosophy to psychology and, up to a point he argues with plausibility:- "But on Hume's view

> this task, as the metaphysician conceives it, is an impossible one; all he can hope to do is to describe the way in which we come to believe that one thing is necessarily connected with another - which is just prescriptive psychology."[17]

He expounds what he means by this further when he writes:-

> "Hume's positivism substitutes psychology for the traditional

15. Noxon op. cit. 7
16. " " " 150
17. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. London, Duckworth Press in 1980. 12

metaphysics..."[18]

At the end of the day it all boils down to how you define a psychologist and how you define a philosopher. Accepting that many of the traditional assumptions in philosophy were proving untenable; at the very least, the philosophical study of what we now call psychology was bound to undergo major change. This was even true of methodology. In the past the metaphysician was free to develop theories which simply came out of his own head. Now that was no longer possible. The philosopher could no longer afford to ignore the work of the anatomist or the physiologist. That's what Hume had come to appreciate.

> "...experimental psychology would yield a theory of human nature from which solutions to the problems of epistemology and of aesthetics, ethics, and politics could all be derived."[19]

The approach of the philosopher simply had to change. If he was working in the Aristotelian tradition, then, the empirical approach would not have been foreign. It was what following that approach was bringing to light that was so surprising, and it left the philosopher with a major task to try and make sense of it.

The problem of where psychology belongs has still not been resolved fully, whether you look at it from the side of philosophy or of science. There is a scientific side to it, for it aims to begin with empirical physiology and progress through to a host of experiments designed to cast light on human behaviour. While there can be little debate about the scientific credentials of experiments based on physiological data about which the scientific community is in agreement, claims made from some of the other psychological experiments are much more open to question. To begin with Hume was not aware that the approach to the study of psychology which today we call Behaviourism, would never displace philosophy. According to Noxon's account of Hume's position, he did at one stage believe that 'the science of man', would prove to

18. Passmore op. cit. 74
19. Noxon op. cit. 1

be the proper foundation for all the other sciences, and so conseq uently of philosophy as well.

Aware that this charge would lead to the conclusion that Hume had reduced philosophy to psychology, Noxon responds:-

> "Thus Hume's 'reduction of philosophy to psychology' of which Passmore speaks, takes place only after philosophical analysis has shown that necessary connection calls for psychological rather than for cosmological theorizing."[20]

In fact it was the realization that the science of man was silent on key philosophical questions which led Hume to conclude that it was not the proper foundation for moral philosophy. A clear change of attitude can be discerned in Hume's outlook from that period when he returned from the Continent, brim-full of confidence that a scientific understanding of man would solve our moral problems; to the Hume who claimed that it was futile to try and sort out these problems objectively and rationally, because the only hope of finding an answer lay in looking within. To illustrate the point these Two sets of quotations are set out side-by-side.

> "...the science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences..." "Even Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Natural Religion, are in some measure dependent on the science of Man..."[21]

and,

> "Mathematics, indeed, are useful in all mechanical operations, and arithmetic in almost every art and profession: But 'tis not of themselves they have any influence. Mechanics are the art of regulating the motions of bodies <u>to some design'd end or purpose</u>; and the reason why we employ arithmetic in fixing the proportions of numbers, is only that we may discover the proportions of their influence and operation. ... Abstract or demonstrative reasoning,

20. Noxon op. cit.

21. " " "

> therefore, never influences any of our actions, but only as it directs our judgement concerning causes and effects; which leads us to the second operation of the understanding."[22]

> "Since reason alone can never produce any action, or give rise to volition, I infer, that the same faculty is as incapable of preventing volition, or of disputing the preference with any passion or emotion."[23]

In these two sets of passages we have these conflicting views set forward. The first proclaims great faith in the 'science of man', which is considered so fundamental to every branch of learning, that it is basic to philosophy. The second tells us that exact sciences such as mathematics have nothing to say about human motivation. Of what use then is the indispensable foundation of the 'science of man'? This in Noxon's answer:-

> "...supposing, as a good Lockian would, that if he can discover how men do in fact acquire knowledge and belief, he will be able to show which objects and methods conform to the natural principles of the human understanding and which do not. Is seems that Hume originally conceived this problem as one of empirical psychology to be resolved by an adaption of the experimental method, to which he was reputedly attracted through his admiration for Newton."[24]

> "It is well known from Hume's own testimony that he was driven by the analytic spirit into scepticism - 'the barren rock' he calls it where he is reduced 'almost to despair' upon realizing 'the impossibility of amending or correcting ... the wretched condition, weakness and disorder of the faculties'."[25]

So that within the Treatise itself we find that there is a transition in Hume's thinking away from the first view and towards the second. The importance of the empirical sciences in helping us to arrive at a fuller

22. A Treatise of Human Nature. by D. Hume. Part III (Edited by MacIntyre in Hume's Ethical Writings) New York, Macmillans 1965. 178
23. Treatise. op. cit. (Edited by MacIntyre) 179
24. Noxon op. cit. 6
25. " " " 7

understanding of the natural world or of human nature was not being questioned by this change of outlook, but the range of questions it could deal with was reduced drastically.

For that reason it is necessary to conclude that there is a philosophical side to the study of psychology, and Hume was beginning to explore that side as well. Modern psychology owes much to Hume. The fact that he came to appreciate that the scientific side to psychology would only ever help us to understand better e.g., how the brain and nervous system work, enabled him to accept this branch without making the mistake of supposing that it had dealt with the philosophical questions as well. That is why much of Hume's work on psychological questions is really an exploration of the philosophical implications. A.J. Ayer was unhappy with this interpretation, asserting that "...'the discussion of psychological questions is out of place in a philosophical enquiry'..."[26] And Passmore, as we have noted, charged Hume with reducing philosophy to psychology. But Noxon was right to insist that there is an area of overlap between physiology and psychology which can only be dealt with by philosophy, and to defend Hume's reputation as a philosopher when he dealt with psychological questions.

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If Hume did then come to accept the distinction between philosophy and psychology, where did the question of how we form our beliefs fit into his 'new, naturalistic world'? To begin with he worked on a causal mechanism which would account for the way in which 'ideas' are transformed into 'beliefs'. His technical definition of a belief is a "... lively idea related to or associated with a present impression."[27] As if the signals which pass through the senses into the mind etch themselves on the memory, so that, while the signals themselves are faint, their repeated impression in the form of an identical series of patterns,

26. Shaftesbury and the French Deists. by Dorothy B. Schlegel. Published by the University of North Carolina in 1956 6

27. Schlegel op. cit. 109

eventually create an enduring sensation which can be called a belief. This sensation is then fed back from the memory to a point closer to the sense organs, only this time to be activated much more easily from the faint, perishing, incoming signals. The strong association between memory and belief is stated in Hume : "Thus it appears that belief or assent which always attends the memory and the senses, is nothing but the vivacity they present."[28] In this connection Passmore claims; "Hume wants to show that the content of a belief is identical with the content of what is being entertained..."[29]

But that is just the beginning of the story, because, as N.K. Smith has argued, Hume did not propose to "...justify our ultimate beliefs..." only to trace them "...to their sources in the constitutions of our human nature."[30] So that we must go beyond the technical definition which Hume gives us to demonstrate how the belief-making process may take place in the nervous system and the brain, to a consideration of the input which forms the raw materials out of which beliefs are made.

1. Divine Revelation.

The existence of this source of knowledge would have been questioned by Hume, but not rejected completely. We have still to come to his attitude to Theism, and the Theistic view of Divine Revelation, both General and Special, would not necessarily have contradicted Hume's theory of how we form our beliefs, i.e., his 'causal theory of perception'. According to Bricke; "Hume claims that the mind is a system of causally related perceptions."[31] The Theist would want to argue that, not only is Behaviourism wrong when it focuses too much on human physical responses to the exclusion of man's spiritual dimension: but, man's soul is of the greatest importance. The Theistic understanding of the soul would lead us to conclude that man is more than a machine, whose workings we can understand perfectly; and more than an advanced mammal which may bear superficial similarities to man but lacks a human brain or developed

28. A Treatise of Human Nature. by David Hume Vol 1. Published by Longmans, Green, and Company in 1874. 387

29. Passmore op. cit. 99

30. Treatise (As quoted by N.K. Smith in The Philosophy of David Hume.) 458

31. Bricke op. cit. 30

religious beliefs; and more than man depicted as a materialist or secularlist: an elusive spiritual quality inspires him to seek for God. There can be no doubt that Hume was taught that man has a soul in his home, in church and at school. This belief may have been soundly shaken by the 'new, naturalistic world' which he had espoused, but had it disappeared completely? It is very difficult to read the mature Hume and believe that it had. In The Natural History of Religion he adopted an attitude to religious belief which is quite different to that found in his sceptical writings. Here is what he had to say about the nature of man:-

> "Adam, rising at once, in paradise, and in the full perfection of his faculties, would naturally, as represented by Milton, be astonished at the glorious appearances of nature, the heavens, the air, the earth, his own organs and members; and would be led to ask, whence this wonderful scene arose."[32]

> "Any of the human affections may lead us into the notion of invisible intelligent power; hope as well as fear, gratitude as well as affliction; But if we examine our own hearts, or observe what passes around us, we shall find, that men are much oftner thrown on their knees by the melancholy than by the agreeable passions."[33]

This, then, is not the area where Hume and the Theist need have parted company. The 'causal theory of perception' in the formation of beliefs is not damaging to the Theistic view of man, because the Theist has also to accept that there must be an interaction between man's physical body and his spiritual dimension before he can form his beliefs. The Theist neither exalts the human body so that the spiritual dimension is downgraded, nor does he exalt the realm of the spirit at the expense of real life in a human body. This is very important, because physiology - the study of the physical structure and workings of the body - tells us little about a person's beliefs and how they are formed. The rich intellec-

32. The Natural History of Religion. by David Hume. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press 1976. 28

33. The Natural History of Religion. op. cit. 36

tual life in which Hume revelled, for example, could never be discovered through examining the workings of his brain. Were a psychologist or a physiologist given the assignment of establishing a person's beliefs purely from a physical examination of that person's bodily processes, only a very limited amount of information could be obtained. Had Hume's original hunches proved correct, such a physical examination would have brought to light a physical mechanism which created beliefs. We have already looked at the theory that 'an enduring sensation' could be such a mechanism.

It would be equally mistaken to imagine that such an examination could tell us nothing. The doctor or nurse working in a psychiatric unit could tell us otherwise. What is happening to our body can colour our beliefs. A person's opinions when in perfect health and at the height of his powers are likely to be different to those which he may fleetingly express when delirious with a fever.

Nevertheless, the human spirit is very strong. Most of all in that part of our spiritual and psychological make-up connected with the formation and holding on to of our beliefs. And, while education, severe illness, persecution and torture may have the effect of changing our outlook for a time, given the opportunity to recover, it is remarkable how fully the former beliefs can be restored. The resilience of the human spirit is not to be underestimated.

Thus we are brought to see that the inter-dependence of the body and the human spirit is total. Bricke points out that Hume was an interactionist, so that here too we find that his position is similar to that held by the Theist. The Christian too welcomes all the information that can be gleaned about the way in which our physical constitution affects what we believe. Hume's interest in this field was fully justified, although he undoubtedly overestimated what could be learned from the information which medical research was uncovering.

> "Although Hume is a mind-body dualist one looks in vain to him for a developed account of the differences between the mental and physical; between perceptions and the features of physical objects."[34]

However we describe his anthropological model, he did at least concede that it is possible to contemplate God's existence:-

> "When we affirm that a God is existent, we simply form the idea of such a being..."[35]

To contemplate God's existence at all would have presented a major problem for the out-and-out Continental atheist. And yet, Hume observed, contemplate God's existence we in fact do. Such contemplation is commonplace. Top of the list of many people's beliefs is that God exists. Under Hume's exposition of all the materials of thinking, we can see that the way in which he accounts for this belief is, "...we simply form the idea of such a being..."[36] Ideas belonging to this category would, in Hume's system, come before 'beliefs proper'. But the distinction between the categories is not easy to maintain. Hume was aware that the process of building up beliefs was a progressive one; through images, perceptions, ideas and then beliefs. 'Beliefs' made the return journey from the memory, into the forefront of our thinking to meet the stream of signals coming from the senses. But what value could be attached to an idea, such as an idea of God, at any point on the inward journey to the memory or the return journey to the senses? Or how could the validity of one idea be judged in relation to another equally clear idea? And, are the senses reliable? Hume's final answer to these basic questions was that our faculties are incapable of providing us with a satisfactory answer. In admitting the finitude of the human mind in the face of the questions raised by the idea of an infinite God, he was laying bare what lay at the heart of his scepticism.

In order to explain how beliefs are formed, we need to be able to take

34. Bricke op. cit. 44
35. Treatise op. cit. (Edited by Green & Grose) 394
36. " " " " 394

into account all that can be learned from life. Hume at times was guilty of imagining that the question of beliefs could be settled on the basis of the empirical approach alone. Whereas, life's really big questions have to do with with a sphere which is beyond human experience. To give one obvious example, Hume's ideas as a philosopher (which, in the context of the present discussion we can call beliefs) were not exclusively the product of his own experience. Far from it. All the time he was drawing on a body of wisdom which he had encountered from his earliest years. This body of wisdom was partly made up of knowledge which had been gleaned from the practical experience of life: we may call it empirical knowledge. But it was also made up of religious and artistic ideas, as well as a great deal of mythology; and this additional information was of equal importance to the first category in the forming of the most important beliefs. That is why there can be no meaningful discussion of beliefs without reference to this second category, because human experience can only be explained adequately in its relationship to the entire created order. Hume was not prepared for this discovery, and, when confronted with it he either reacted in a very inconsistent manner:-

> "We find him even asserting that the peculiarity of the belief lies in the 'manner of the conception', quite as if 'belief' were, after all, an attitude of the believer, as distinct from a property of the believed."[37]

Or else, he is driven to belittling the powers of the human faculties:-

> "Hume constantly employs that species of sceptical argument to which Berkley in particular objected, the argument that the faculties we have are few, and those designed by nature for the support and pleasures of life, and not to penetrate into the inward essence and constitution of things ..."[38]

Hume tended to evade references to the transcendent, that is to a

37. Passmore op. cit. 103
38. " " " 141

realm beyond actual experience. This is significant, because it stands in contrast to an earlier outlookwhich he adopted when he returned from the Continent, flushed with the confidence of secular humanism. His attitude then was that the human mind was so reliable that it could be considered the measure of all things. He was now protesting that the powers of the human faculties were strictly limited.

The way in which he made his protest, however, closed him off from a satisfactory answer to man's finitude - the Incarnation. The Incarnation proclaims uniquely that in Christ the gulf between Divine Transcendence and human finitude has been spanned. The Gospel records of the Nativity illustrate this for us very well. In them we see a human baby born into our world in circumstances which must have recurred again and again at the time of a census, during the Roman occupation of Palestine. There was nothing so very unusual about the manner of Jesus' birth. And yet, the writers of the Gospels in common with all the early Christians saw in that birth something which was far from ordinary. They saw in the birth of Jesus the presence of Divine transcendence. The birth itself is the finite element, because it was rooted in human experience, an experience which is known to every family. The infinite element, the belief set forward so clearly in the Creeds that this baby was also 'very God of very God' was not obvious to all: it was not part of the actual experience of all the people who were living in Palestine at the time of Jesus' birth, as could be seen by the attitude of the Roman authorities who, at the most, thought that an infant had been born who some of the Jews might want to believe was their future king. So that acceptance of our Lord's true deity is really an article of faith. And yet, an extremely important article for non-Christians and unbelievers as well, because in the person of Jesus Christ these two irreconcilables - the finite and the transcendent - are brought together. Hume was discovering that this was of the greatest importance

in his work as a philosopher. As his career progressed he turned away from the transcendent and from the rationalist approach to the use of the mind, to the much smaller world of private intuitions. In Kant's Critique of Practical Reason we find what was often missing in Hume's outlook: a balance between the inner life of the individual, and the transcendent expanse of the sky above.

> "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftner and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within."[39]

2. Education.

In the end Hume, according to Passmore, was driven to advancing the rather elementary explanation that education is what forms 'beliefs' which are not associated with 'impressions'. This must in part have been the result of personal experience. He had set out on his career as a fully-fledged, free-thinking philosopher, convinced that he was now master of his destiny. His studies and travel did indeed alter his outlook significantly. But when he came to reflect on that most private of possessions - his actual beliefs - the beliefs which had survived all his travels and which he had now no desire to change - to his amazement, they were the beliefs which had been inculcated during his upbringing and education.

In a number of respects this was contrary to what he had been expounding when he had declared that standards of right and wrong were universal and had no connection with religion, because, when he looked closely at the beliefs towards which he felt an attachment, he found that he was biased in favour of the beliefs of his upbringing and education. He had discovered that it was not at all easy to cross over the 'right' and 'wrong' boundaries with impunity. Therefore, to find out about a person's beliefs it was necessary to give up any pretence

39. Critique of Practical Reason. by E. Kant. Oxford at Clarendon 205 London 1963.

that they could be discovered by examining them in some physical way. Instead, it was necessary to find out about their education. The input here was vastly more complex than could be accounted for by simple scientific experiments. On moral questions most of all, the scientific approach was seen to be out of place.

Hume's career as a philosopher illustrates very well the argument from education, for he was less of a systematic thinker than a 'magpie' who immersed himself in learned literature of all kinds from every age, and then tried to make sense of it. Because of his outstanding gifts he was able to keep up this hectic pace and pursue several theories simultaneously, only to find that when he understood them they differed so fundamentally that they could not be reconciled. We look in vain for the final system which modern scholars claim to have found, in the complete Hume. And this despite the attempts of the Mossners and Noxons to expound this system and make up for the deficiencies in it as propounded by Hume. The one system which he did adhere to consistently was the Intuitionism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. It only made sense against a religious background. There is little doubt that Hume attempted to develop the system which the Mossners and the Noxons have in mind, but its deficiencies were obvious to him, even at a fairly early stage in his career. In the end he was driven to offer apologies in the place of arguments. He was still the product of his education. Faithfully he could reproduce the arguments of a generation of leading thinkers, but seldom able to offer an alternative interpretation of their view which eliminated the defects and contradictions. He extended a number of theories to their logical conclusions, only to find that they led to dead-ends.

Because he was so completely the product of his upbringing and education, the contribution made to his ideas by Presbyterian teaching may have been considerable. That is why, in spite of his scepticism

clear traces of a Christian upbringing and education can be found in his 'beliefs'. It could be argued that that is true by definition, because of the account which he developed about how our beliefs are formed. There can be no doubting the strong Christian influence in his upbringing:-

> "(One wonders if David Hume, sitting in his bedroom, ever let his absent mind wander back forty-five years to Ninewells and another very different bedroom, Mrs. Home's, where he sat working at Despanter's Latin Grammar, while the Rev. George Home discoursed upon the Covenanters. ...)"[40]

In The life of David Hume Ernest Campbell Mossner fills in the background of Hume's upbringing and education. "In religion," he tells us, "...the Ninewells family were Presbyterians, ... Church of Scotland..."[41] Mossner readily concedes that " ... as a young boy David had no prepossessions against religion..."[42] On the contrary, because, of his "... kicking over the sabbatical traces as a boy, there is not the slightest indication. On his own word he was 'religious when he was young'...".[43] And, "Taking his religion unusually seriously, the young David Hume was attracted to the task of soul-searching."[44] There can be little doubt then about the form of his early education. MacIntyre draws attention to the strictures to which Hume would have been subject during a typical Scottish Sabbath, when he would have been expected to read heavy devotional works, such as Human Nature in the Fourfold State. He became a member of the Church of Scotland. His progress up until this point was exactly that of a young member of the Church of Scotland, who would one day become an Elder. That was the image of the young David Hume which many in his Parish must have had. We know that there was another side to this young, intense undergraduate's character; because, in addition to reading the set Sabbath devotional works which his mother would have distributed to the family, he was also reading

40. David Hume. by J.Y.T. Greig. Published by Jonathan Cape, London in 1954. 291

41. Mossner op. cit. 32

42. " " " 33

43. " " " 34

44. " " " 34

widely into secular subjects, probably again at the instigation of his mother. As he became a student at Edinburgh University h e encountered the writings of the sceptical philosophers, and this was to awa ken in his own outlook a sceptical attitude to religious belief and the Christian instruction which he had received in his youth. Just how obvious this change of outlook was is difficult to tell. There is much evidence to suggest that he did not make a point of advertising it. The folk in his own Parish may not even have been aware of it until some of his more provocatively sceptical works were published. I t is true that among sceptical scholars he did feel free to express his scepticism, but even here it was always with so many reservations that they seldom found it convincing. The fact that he never sought to leave the membership of the Church of Scotland must undermine the claims of his secular admirers, when they try to demonstrate that he represented the 'new, naturalistic' outlook of the Continental sceptics. It did come to his notice that there were moves afoot to excommunicate him from the Kirk at a meeting of the General Assembly, and although he tried to make light of it, it is significant that he did not dismiss this threat as something of no consequence. In a volume entitled New Letters of David Hume we find this footnote which has an important bearing on his attitude to the General Assembly:-

> "The compliment to the Church of Scotland, composed by Hume reads: 'You may be assured that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as by law established, will always meet with Our support to the full enjoyment of their rights and privileges; and We are convinced that the same wise conduct, which has so often manifested itself in your former meetings, will be exerted on the present occasion, and that cordiality, unanimity, and brotherly love will attend all your proceedings, and be the means of securing a happy and satisfactory conclusion of this present meeting of the General Assembly..."[45]

45. New Letters of David Hume. Edited by R. Kilbransky and E.C. Mossner. Published by Oxford at Clarendon in 1954. 170

So much then for the facts about Hume's upbringing and education. On the basis of his pseudo-scientific account of the way in which beliefs are formed, there is really no difficulty in stating that 'his beliefs' were formed by an education which was solidly Presbyterian. But did this Presbyterian upbringing influence his beliefs as a philosopher? According to the view which is being defended in this study, it did. The reason for that claim can be found in his quite deliberate decision to adopt the Intuitionism of a Theist, Francis Hutcheson, rather than take the more consistent line for a sceptic, which would be the atheistic rationalism which was being propounded on the Continent.

> "Descartes' philosophy first gained a hearing in Scotland through Gershom Carmichael, one of Hutcheson's teachers during his undergraduate days in Glasgow University. It was, however, mainly outside Calvinist Scotland, in the much more genial climate of Dublin, that Hutcheson - himself Irish-born, of Protestant-Ulster parentage - found opportunity to acquaint himself with the newer philosophical influences then at work in England."[46]

Although Hutcheson was to encounter opposition within Presbyterian Scotland for introducing some of these newer philosophical influences, his outlook was basically theistic, as was that of other leading British philosophers; which meant that he was not in fundamental disagreement with Scottish Presbyterianism, even although his account of the difference between good and evil would have been questioned.

> "Owing, however, to Hutcheson's theistic outlook (Lockean, rather than Cartesian in type), he expounds these views in a context which tends to conceal their ultimate implications. He is assuming that human nature is so providentially ordered that in our instinctively determined, common-sense judgements we are only anticipating what, as holding correspondingly to a 'superior Kind, analogous to our Moral Sense', has sanctions which reason, when theologically employed, may suffice to establish."[47]

46. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith. London, the MacMillan Press 1945. 23

47. Smith op. cit. 45

So long as Hume adhered to Hutcheson's Intuitionism he was able to enjoy his friendship, but, once he began to give it a more secular interpretation their friendship cooled, and Hutcheson who must have in many ways admired Hume's gifts, opposed his appointment to the Professorship at Edinburgh University.

3. Pleasure and Pain.

If beliefs governing the 'right' and 'wrong' distinction came, according to Hume's system, from the 'sensitive' rather than the 'cognitive' side of human nature; then, aspects of the way in which the 'sensitive side' worked could be traced to the emotions of pleasure and pain. This theory, which he had inherited from Locke, laid the foundation for what was to become Utilitarianism. "To the question why justice is approved the only answer is by reference to utility."[48]

4. Reason.

If pleasure and pain represent the basic passions in Hume's theory from which we derive our 'good and evil' distinctions, there is an association between these emotions and reason before we arrive at clearly perceived beliefs. He held strongly to the view that "..pleasure is conditioned by objectively directed passions.."[49] and that passion is also the source of energy for the reasoning activity which takes place in the mind. That is why 'belief' in Hume should be seen as closely related to'reason'. "...'belief' is coming to have an honorific meaning, to suggest reasonableness."[50] The Reason-Sense relationship is a complex one and that fact was appreciated in antiquity.

> "Antithesis of this sort - Reason against Instinct and Reason against Sense, Reason against Reason - are, of course, a favourite sceptical device: in particular, Hume is here imitating the practice of Sextus Empiricus."[51]

	Smith	op. cit.	
48.	"	" "	147
49.	"	" "	143
50.	Passmore	op. cit.	62
51.	"	" "	140

If Hume did accept the connection between 'reason' and 'belief', he was also driven to admit that 'reason' could lead to scepticism. In Volume One of the Treatise he states that reason cannot be defended by reason. Moreover, moral distinctions are not derived from reason.

> "It would be tedious to repeat all the arguments, by which I have prov'd, that reason is perfectly inert, and can never either prevent or produce any action or affection.
>
> Reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact. Whatever, therefore is not susceptible of this agreemet or disagreement, is incapable of being true or false, and can never be an object of our reason. Now 'tis evident our passions, volitions, and actions, are not susceptible of any such agreement or disagreement; being original facts and realities, compleat in themselves, and implying no reference to other passions, volitions, and actions. 'Tis impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or comformable to reason." 52

The role which 'reason' then plays in, for example, the making of moral choices is strictly limited. In a later section we will examine in greater depth the distinction between Rationalism and Intuitionism, Rationalism attaching much greater importance to the value of 'reason' than Intuitionism; and why Hume can be placed so firmly in the second camp.

5. Association.

Association also played an important part in Hume's account of the way in which we form beliefs. The process of pondering information which

52. Treatise op. cit. (Edited by MacIntyre in Hume's Ethical Writings.)

has been stored in the memory, so that one concept or idea can be compared with another; leads to the joining together of relevant items of information so that a person's grasp of facts and principles increases. N.K. Smith claims that what prevented Hume from arriving at a psychological understanding of association was, "...his lack of clearness in regard to the nature and grounds of the distinction between the objects of immediate experience and the objects of belief."[53]

6. Recapitulation.

Hume understood the full complexity of what takes place in the formation of a belief. There is the return of 'beliefs' from the memory to the forefront of the senses. But, other beliefs formed in the past have an influence as well on the formation of a belief, making it necessary to take into account what Green has referred to as the 'natural history of self-consciousness'.[54] He suggests the valuable analogy from geology, pointing out that, just as a geologist must "...treat the present conformation of the earth as the result of a certain series of past events, and yet, in describing these, should assume the present conformation as a determining element in each."[55] So too must the psychologist interpret 'the present conformation' of someone's given belief in the light of earlier experiences. In Hume we can trace the same aim to examine in depth human consciousness and the formation of a belief.

> "No one has pursued it with stricter promises, or made a fairer show of being faithful to them, than Hume. He will begin with simple feeling...by interpreting the earlier consciousness in terms of the latest, it puts the latter in place of the former..."[56]

This study led him to appreciate the 'impossibility of attempting to reduce self-consciousness to a series of events' (my paraphrase of Green) because self-consciousness is so complex. The more analytic

53.	Smith	op. cit.		249
54.	Treatise	op. cit.	(Edited by Green & Grose)	165
55.	"	" "	"	165
56.	"	" "	"	165

Hume's approach to the question of how we form our beliefs became, the more he appreciated that analysis will only ever tell us so much. That is why, for the purposes of this study, we will follow Passmore's account of Hume's final doctrine of how we form our beliefs - which is that it is education which forms beliefs not associated with 'impressions'. There is in any case a strong argument in favour of the view that Hume's other more technical, psychological explanations can all be accommodated within that account. That is why some attention will be given to his own educational background. A brief sketch of that background has already been given (see pages 7-12). From it, it is obvious that, if education is the formative influence in the shaping of our beliefs, then we would expect Hume's outlook to be Christian. That is a claim which we will have at the back of our minds throughout the rest of this study. Does the claim stand up to a close scrutiny of his philosophical writings? According to the case which is being argued in this study it does, and the conclusive evidence in support of that view lies in his Intuitionism. After his first visit to the Continent Hume could have become an atheistic Rationalist. There is much about what has been described as 'his new, naturalistic world' which would have fitted in better with that approach. But he chose quite deliberately to remain an Intuitionist. As the relationship between the various types of Intuitionism and Rationalism is so germane to this discussion, a major section has been devoted to its study. But already, in the section covered by pages 38 - 43, we are introduced to the reason why Hume remained an Intuitionist as well as to other aspects of his educational background.

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For the purpose of this interpretation of Hume, a clear grasp of his anthropological model is essential. Were we to examine it superficially, we might be led to conclude that it was a product of the Enlightenment.

As we have been discovering from our study of his 'new, naturalistic world', it contains strong Enlightenment emphases. There is present the new preoccupation with the physical, psychological processes influencing behaviour, including the total mental state. This had in its favour the fact that for the first time psychology was being given a soundly empirical basis. Although several of Hume's hunches were reasonably accurate, it must be remembered that most of his conclusions were of a completely speculative nature.

That was one side of the picture. The physical and the physiological. Because there was still plenty of room left for a universe of spiritual activity - and this included the espousal of strong moral convictions - his model held to much more than a crudely mechanistic view of the human body. So that it is important to bear in mind the two extremes. That of a crudely reductionistic 'psychological determinism', on the one hand; and of a spiritual life very much rooted in the Calvinistic Edinburgh of the period, on the other. Hume was much more in tune with with this aspect of Edinburgh life than many of his secular interpreters have been willing to accept. He must, for example, have listened to preachers like John Brown, for he said of him - "That man preaches as if Christ stood at his elbow."[57] By present-day standards he would have been considered prudish, as modern sceptics appear little concerned about questions relating to modesty! His 'scepticism' had not produced a radically different anthropological model.

1. The Presuppositions Behind Hume's Model.

Although Hume quite often adopted the airs of an impartial freethinker, it would be wrong to concede from the outset that his outlook was unaffected by religious ideas. At all times his anthropological model must be viewed as the product of a thinker with highly developed religious ideas.

57. Scottish Theology. by J. MacLeod. Edinburgh, Knox Press 1973.

Two major presuppositions are present in his anthropological model. The first was the Intuitionism which he inherited from Francis Hutcheson. The second, an ontology and cosmology which incorporated into its total framework, something akin to Kant's 'abstract moral ideas'.

a. 'An Intuitionism which held to a religious view of man'. In view of the fact that Hume, in Book III of the Treatise, insists that "Moral Distinctions are Not Deriv'd from Reason"[58] and bases much of the reasoning in the middle section of the Treatise on that claim, we cannot read or interpret him without confronting his Intuitionism. It is the key to his moral theory.

He attempted to make this moral theory work by uniting the Intuitionist approach with psychological determinism. He had already explored the possibility of finding a 'physical mechanism for belief', only to realize that it led to a dead-end. The new attempt, that of combining the intuitionist approach with psychological determinism, was proving to be much more sound. It sought to bring together the empirical and non-empirical factors in human behaviour. It is also true that he struck the balance well. Psychology was endeavouring to put the study of human nature on a scientific basis. This had not been done properly before. Much important information was to be gleaned from following this approach. But psychology could only answer a limited range of questions. There is a side of human nature which it could not explain, because that side cannot be examined by empirical tests. H.J. Paton has explained this well in his Introduction to the Moral Law. He writes that there are those who, "...were not content to regard themselves as the victims of instinctive movements over which they have no intelligent control."[59] Hume was aware of that conviction, and he accounted for it through his version of Intuitionism. In his writings we see these two sides of his anthropological model side by side: on the one hand there is the Empiricism of the psychological approach, on the other his Intuitionism.

58. Treatise op. cit. Book III (Ed. MacIntyre) 183

59. The Moral Law. Edited by H.J. Paton. London, Hutcheson University Press 1969. 7&8

So that we very quickly find ouselves between these two approaches, having to make a number of value-judgments. For example, for reasoning 'of the highest quality' to be achieved several factors had to be in order. The philosopher would have to have achieved a certain level of education. But, as well as having a clear, well-trained mind, he would also have needed to be able to concentrate his mind 'at that particular time'. Moreover, what is meant by - 'reasoning of the highest quality'? Scholars need not be united that such and such a work is a clear cut example of that.

More and more Humewas having to rely on a set of value-judgments. How did he account for them; from where did they come? A strong case has been argued already for identifying upbringing and education as the main influences which shape our beliefs. That is how we feel obliged to answer the question on Hume's behalf. In Hume's case there is no doubting the influence of Christian value-judgments on his early training. In view of his later education it may be felt that that account is just too simplistic, and we have taken account of the much more complex route he was to follow once his earlier training had been completed: nevertheless, a thorough study of his later works will confirm that, in his beliefs, he was gravitating more and more back in the direction of his spiritual roots. His 'philosophy of religion' will be examined in a later section.

If that was the case, and we can find in the later Hume a softening of his attitude to the faith of his childhood, then, we can only conclude that his adherence to Intuitionism was accompanied by an increasing realization of the importance of religious beliefs to the fundamental value-judgments in question. Is Hume's anthropology similar in a number of respects to the religious anthropological model we find in the Bible?

The model of the 'integrated personality' does find full and beautiful expression in the Bible. It may be necessary to search diligently for it

but it is arguably there. It may not be clear from one chapter of the Bible or from one book of the Bible alone, and that is what leads one biblical scholar to say that its view of man is one thing whereas another scholar says something quite different; and yet if follow the main teaching of most of the books of the Bible, an optimistic view of man and his future does emerge. There is a passage in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion in which Hume presents to us an optimistic view of man - "...when a man is in a cheerful disposition, he is fit for business or company or entertainment of any kind..."[60] This 'cheerful disposition' concept represents an important ideal state for Hume, and it is one to which we will return in the section which examines his Intuitionism.

The 'optimistic view of man' and the 'cheerful disposition' ideal state were not all that common in the first century A.D. The body/spirit union, which some would regard as a legacy of centuries of Christian teaching, was quite rare in other religions and cultures. Gnosticism, for example, tended to elevate the spiritual at the expense of the physical. It created a dichotomy which made integration impossible. On account of this, a low view of the human body resulted. What the body did was of little consequence. "The soul of salvable man is a spark of divinity imprisoned in the body..."[61] Redemption meant the soul's escape from corporeal defilement, and its absorption into its source.

At the other extreme, the later Epicureans tended to place the emphasis on the physical to the detriment of the spiritual. That was why they gave themselves over to the gratification of their voluptuous appetites.[62] Epicurean teaching was materialistic and in this way threatened spiritual values.

When we compare some 20th. century philosophies with Hume's 'cheerful disposition' ideal state, we are reminded of how dismal some of them can be. Some existentialist philosophers would want to find a

60. Hume's Ethical Writings. Edited by A. MacIntyre. New York by Collier-MacMillan Ltd., in 1965. 11

61. The New Bible Dictionary. London, Inter-Varsity Press in 1972. 473

62. An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals. by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre. Published by Collier-MacMillan Ltd., in 1965) 112 134

place for the darker shades in human nature, on the ground that they are a part of real human expereince. As such, they should neither be diminished nor denied. Because of that, ambiguous attitudes to the same traits can be discerned at the present time, in popular as well as high-brow culture.

Whereas Hume, we are told, had an "...open, social and cheerful humour."[63] He wanted no truck with the Gnostic dichotomy, or the Thomistic speculation concerning the 'subsistence of the soul'. At the same time, he did not just see man as a 'naked ape', as suggested by some anthropological studies of the 20th. century in which man is seen primarily as the highest of the primates. Hume saw the human spirit as having tremendous potential and because of that was for a cultivation of all that was accessible in the realm of morality. That was why his scepticism did not prevent him from praising what look suspiciously like Christian virtues.

It is noteworthy that Utilitarians were later to introduce a 'felicific calculus', or scale of human pleasures, in order to try and remove the impression that Utilitarianism was only concerned with the gratification of lower pleasures.

Hume took the trouble to define in broad terms what he understood by virtue. "It is indeed obvious that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, vivacity; and in blaming the opposite qualities."[64] A selection which would not look out of place in the New Testament! Similar qualities are praised outside a Christian context, but not necessarily that selection or in harmony with the way in which Hume would have interpreted them. These were very important for an understanding of his 'cheerful disposition' ideal.

The full biblical view of the Christian way of life, however, went far beyond Hume's ideal state. The New Testament speaks of the Christian as the "new creation"; "...a reborn microcosm belonging to the eschatolo-

63. MacIntyre op. cit. 9

64. Of the Standard of Taste. (Hume's Ethical Writings) Ed. MacIntyre, MacMillan, 1965. 275

gical macrocosm of the new heavens and the new earth."[65] The Christian would argue that there must be a renewing of one's moral judgment as well as of one's resolve to do good. There is a hint of this approach in one of Hume's letters to Hutcheson - "...in your observing, that there wants a certain Warmth in the Cause of Virtue, which, you think, all good Men wou'd relish...I intend to make a new Tryal, if it be possible to make the Moralist and Metaphysician agree a little better."[66] But nowhere does he offer the prayer of 1 Thessalonians 5; "...the God who gives us peace, make you holy in every way, and keep your whole being, spirit, soul and body, free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."[67]

2. The acceptance of abstract moral standards.

To Hume's Intuitionism must be added his 'abstract moral standards', because Intuitionism on its own is too subjective to yield a clearly defined moral code. When he asserted that, "It is indeed obvious that writers of all nations and all ages concur in applauding justice, humanity, magnanimity, prudence, vivacity; and in blaming the opposite qualities."[68] he put forward in clear, propositional terms the outline of a set of abstract moral standards. Perhaps H.J. Paton's comment with reference to Kant's cosmology helps to explain what is meant by this.

> "In the face of this," Paton writes, "...Kant offers us a defence of reasonableness in action: he reminds us that, however much the applications of morality may vary with varying circumstances, a good man is one who acts on the supposition that there is an unconditioned and objective moral standard holding for all men in virtue of their rationality as human beings."[69]

'An unconditioned and objective moral standard holding for all men in virtue of their rationality'. To discuss this fully would take us into a major study of Paton's understanding of Kant, but he does appear to

65. New London Commentaries. (2 Corinthians) by P.E. Hughes Edinburgh, 1962. ch.5
66. Mossner op. cit. 135
67. 1 Thessalonians 5. GNB.
68. Of the Standard of Taste. by David Hume. (from - Hume's Ethical Writings. Ed. MacIntyre, Macmillan 1965). 275
69. Paton op. cit. 7

be saying two things which are of relevance to what is being said about Hume. First, that Kant was postulating an objective moral standard. Second, that this is recognized because of our 'rationality' as human beings. In this context that description is significant because he appear to be suggesting that this is something which the mind apprehends, rather than the inner self intuits. As we will see later, among the Theistic Proofs, Kant still retained a high regard for the 'moral argument'. Hume too is committed to saying something similar. In the passage just quoted he appears to be saying that there is an 'unconditioned and objective moral standard' by which reasonable people everywhere can arrive at similar conclusions over a vast range of moral questions. His Intuitionism declared that man has an innate capacity to discern between right and wrong. Civilized man has become morally aware. Equally, the range of situations in which man can discern the presence of factors which speak to this moral sense is very wide. Man's environment is charged with moral implications. Hardly the view of the world expressed by Philo in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion., when he described it as "...blind nature."[70]

And so it is evident that Hume's emphasis on the importance of examining empirically the physiological factors underlying behaviour in no way diminished the richness of man's spiritual life. In the same way a soundly based understanding of the physical processes at work in the world as man's habitat, did not diminish the fact that it presented to him moral questions. Man may have an innate capacity to discern between right and wrong, but to achieve what Hume was endeavouring to achieve - the formulation of a new moral theory - it was also necessary to think about the need for moral distinctions, as well as about the reasons why most people throughout the world tend to approve of one set of values and disapprove of another. For Kant as well as Hume these questions were of the greatest importance.

a. To prove the antiquity of the major 'virtues' Hume quoted Juvenal

70. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. by David Hume. (Ed. MacIntyre) 329

and Cicero. The acceptance ofsuch virtues over a long period of time, somehow established their authority. They stood for the wisdom of the ages.

Interestingly, this view is in conflict with some of the implications of an evolutionary philosophy, which placed the emphasis on the superiority of the ethical systems which developed in more recent times. The way in which this theory was applied to the Old Testament period, led some scholars to the conclusion that the chronological order given there, could, with confidence be re-arranged to conform to a more likely time-table. What were felt to be 'earlier religious ideas' were associated with a primitive ethic; and, what were felt to be 'later religious ideas' to a developed ethic. This is still the outlook in liberal biblical theology. There is undoubtedly a grain of truth in the liberal case, because Christian orthodoxy itself teaches that revelation has been progressive, but this point has been distorted and exaggerated. Archaeology has shown that the philosophical framework which some scholars have imposed on the Old Testament cannot be correct in many places. And, we can see that if Hume was saying that moral virtues have an abiding validity because of their antiquity, then he was cutting across much of what liberal Theology has come to take for granted.

The truth is that, without an 'unconditioned and objective moral standard', neither Hume nor the liberal theologians have any kind of adequate criterion for passing judgment on earlier or later religious ideas. What they were attempting demanded presuppositions of a Theistic kind. That is why it is felt that, once again, he was drawing on a Theistic way of looking at the world. Herman Dooyeweerd was certainly giving expression to that view when he wrote:-

> "So we may posit that the norm of cultural differentiation, integration and individualization is really an objective norm of the unfolding process of human society. It is founded on the divine world-

> order, since it indicates the necessary conditions of this prospective unfolding process, without which mankind cannot fulfil its historical task committed to it by the great cultural commandment. Furthermore, it provides us with an objective criterion to distinguish truly progressive from reactionary tendencies in history."[71]

Hume was attempting to say something similar. He too wanted an objective criterion by which to distinguish 'progressive from reactionary tendencies in history'. However, the assertion that because certain virtues were highly regarded in antiquity they should still be regarded as such today; by itself, did not provide him with it.

b. To the argument 'from antiquity' he added that of universality. The virtues which he held up crossed national, ethnic and class boundaries. Only in later times did, "...philosophy of all kinds, especially ethics..." come to be "...more closely linked with theology, than they ever were with the heathens."[72] Their antiquity and universality suggested that there was something about the givens of life on our planet, in ancient and modern times, which made these virtues indispensable, even if not always attractive.

Hume offered no convincing account, on a naturalistic basis, for such a sweeping claim about the universality of moral virtues. It could be argued that he was far too selective. By concentrating on the similarities he ignored the differences between races and religions. The differences have always been real and deep. And, even if it were true that certain moral values are accepted universally, would that make them virtues? In our iconoclastic age there are anarchists who seem all too eager to overturn traditional values!

This very clear deficiency in Hume's theory could have been made good by the Calvinistic beliefs of 18th. century Scotland. It is not

71. In the Twighlight of Western Thought. by H. Dooyeweerd. New Jersey, the Craig Press 1975. 106

72. Enquiry. (Hume's Ethical Writings Ed. MacIntyre, MacMillan 1965) 155

being claimed that Hume recognized this point or felt inclined to use such a system, but that this separate account was being taught by the theologians of his day. The Reformers did have a consistent theory regarding the reasons why certain virtues are seen to be valid universally and in every age. They attributed this to God's Common Grace. Deriving these virtues from God's character, as witnessed to by His workings in Providence, the Reformers asserted that this was the consistent explanation for a sense of moral awareness throughout the race.

Deism also offered an explanation for this sense of moral awareness. Deists tended to lay the stress on the inherent goodness of everything natural, including human nature. People's vices could be attributed to their lack of 'naturalness'. Had they been allowed to grow up naturally, what they would have given expression to would have been goodness. Rousseau, for example, urged that, "...children brought up 'naturally' would be without the vices of adults." This was because, "...their 'natural impulses'...were inherently noble and just."[73] But the Deistic case did not much impress Hume. We are made aware of this by the forcefulness of his rejection of Deistic naturalism."Nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems which assert that virtue is natural and vice unnatural." This leads him to conclude that, "Every kind of virtue is not natural;..." but is "...some artifice or contrivance e.g. justice."[74]

As we try to discover what was to serve Hume as a guide, in the evaluation of human 'artifices and contrivances', we can see that he set a course into the morass of subjectivism: the morass into which secular existentialism has finally led us. When great minds differ diametrically, who is to determine whose opinion is right? As man, who, according to Hume, is constituted to reason morally endeavours to show why one set of 'artifices' are to be preferred to 'the course of

73. The Psychological Development of the Child. by P.H. Mussen. New Jersey, Prentice-Hall 1963. 2

74. Treatise op. cit. (Ed. MacIntyre, op.cit.) 203

nature', how is he to defend his choice? Does the answer lie in a person's education: or is it merely a matter of shifting 'opinion'? These were important, telling questions. They served to show how much Hume's world-view had developed. They also showed why, without the faith which had trained his enquiring mind, they were proving hard to answer.

We have already noted that the young Hume was given to soul-searching. For Hume the thinker, the morally aware individual must also look within. The approach is that of Presbyterian introspection. According to that approach, the God who "...knows us altogether..." who "...examines us, proves us, and tries our reins..."[75] is able to awaken us out of spiritual slumber and moral laxity, to spiritual alertness and moral carefulness. So that it is much more than a question of ensuring that our physiological processes are working well. Presbyterianism would have held that the body can be in perfect health and yet the conscience asleep. None of this comes across to us in Hume's writings. His language is that of moral philosophy. And yet the emphasis is in many ways similar. If the language of Presbyterian introspection is substituted with that of Hume's Intuitionism, then we may find that the activity in which the individual is engaged is similar. In his case, the answer to a moral problem is found by looking within.

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75. Psalm 139.

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page

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Hutcheson's Intuitionism and Hume's.

The polarisation between Rationalism and Intuitionism in the 18th. century was highly significant. It divided scholars into two camps with quite different ways of looking at the world. It led also to the introduction of a new, highly influential Intuitionism, following a new interpretation by David Hume. If we were to ask today for a brief definition of Humean philosophy, a major part of the answer would be that he was a secular Intuitionist. If we were to ask leading Humean scholars what it is that they find so fascinating about his philosophical ideas, again they would point to the secular Intuitionism which is developed so clearly in his major works. He stands in a tradition. He is a very important figure in that tradition. A great deal of his influence hinges on the nature of his Intuitionism.

Frances Hutcheson (1694-1746) held to a spiritual Intuitionism which had been developed in the Theistic tradition. Another major Intuitionist associated with Hutcheson was Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1670-1713), who had developed his own interpretation of Christian Intuitionism, only, in his case, much more in tune with the fashionable Deism of his age. Whils't rejecting those elements in the popular Christian thinking of his day which smacked of extremism, his Intuitionism depended upon Christian beliefs. Indeed, it would be true to say that Shaftesbury was the main influence in the popularizing of Intuitionism throughout Britain and the Continent.

Rationalism, on the other hand, whils't attracting several leading Christian thinkers in the Theistic tradition, had, especially on the Continent, given rise to a radically new school of thought which sought to present a view of the world which left religious beliefs out of the picture completely. After Hume, there was a secular Intuitionism which provided another secular alternative to secular Rationalism. We have already been following the development of Hume's Intuitionism, and in doing so have been impressed by the soundness of its construction. It

was the product of careful thought and deliberate choice. Hume defended it resolutely in the face of a succession of challenges from other ethical systems. Indeed, once his Intuitionism has been grasped, a major step has been taken to understanding his final position. Nearly all the significant contributions which he had to make can be traced back to it. That is why it is so important that the Rationalist and Intuitionist systems be studied side by side.

For our purposes we can observe that, whereas Intuitionists tended to place the emphasis on human feelings, Rationalists tended to place the emphasis on reason. Intuitionists believed that the source of our thoughts and actions lay in the sensitive part of man, whereas Rationalists believed that to have a proper understanding of the world, we must begin with the mind. In Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature (pp 203 - 220) John Laird discusses Rationalism in relation to Intuitionism; and, in David Hume: the Newtonian Philosopher Nicholas Capaldi discusses the Rationalist model.

David Hume had been exposed to atheistic Rationalism (as held by the Philosophes) at a fairly early period in his career. Capaldi tells us that he was "...greatly influenced by Pierre Bayle's Dictionary of Philosophy."[1] J.F. Lively in The Enlightenment has set Bayle against the background of the movement led by the Philosophes. It was while Hume was secretary to the British Embassy in Paris that he met most of the leading figures of the French Enlightenment. The very concepts which he uses in A Treatise of Human Nature, such as 'the science of man', appear to reveal a Rationalist cast-of-mind, but it would be wrong to conclude that this led him to espouse secular Rationalism. The influence of the Philosophes on him was undoubtedly highly significant, and we can find clear traces of that influence in most of his writings; but these same works contain a convincing outline of the reasons which led him to part company with the Philosophes. What he was saying in the

1. David Hume (The Newtonian Philosopher). by N. Capaldi. Boston, Mass. Twayne Publishers in 1975. page 20

Treatise was that, while the 'science of man is the only solid foundation for the other sciences', all the sciences put together will only tell us so much. And that is a perfectly sound conclusion. The Rationalism of the scientific method, for example, has little to say to us about the 'oughts' of moral obligation.

However, not all the Rationalists of Hume's day were atheists. Capaldi writes:-

> "In Hume's time the rationalist model became associated with religion in a number of ways. One of the Cambridge Platonists, More, had influenced Newton, and Newton's own theological beliefs as well as scientific discoveries were somehow associated as indications both of God's providence and the divine origin of reason."[2]

Capaldi continues:-

> "Since the time of the ancient Greeks Western philosophy has been dominated by the notion that there was a cosmos or totality of existence and that this cosmos was intelligible. In short, the belief arose that there was a rationale for everything and that this rationale was within human grasp. ... Even during the medieval period when we know that the best minds were preoccupied with religious issues, it was assumed by the most outstanding of these men that religion itself was part of the rationale."[3]

At the close of this discussion Capaldi concludes that Hume rejected the 'Neo-platonic, or rationalist, or Augustinean, or Cartesian tradition'. Capaldi gives an outline of Hume's refutation of this kind of Rationalist model.

1. If reason operated solely in terms of the rationalist model (mathematical - deductive), and
2. If men were guided solely by reason, then
3. Men would not act.

2. Capaldi op. cit. 33
3. " " " 35

4. Therefore this is equivalent to the truth of extreme skepticism.

5. But men do act.

6. Therefore extreme skepticism is false.

7. Therefore either reason does not operate soleley in terms of the rationalist model.

8. Or men are not guided solely by reason."[4]

In more recent times another group of Christians has followed the rationalist approach, by stating that beliefs are of greater importance to the profession of the Faith, than subjective feelings which are similar to the intuitionist system. Modern theologians can be divided into(a)the 'lawyers' within the major denominations who are jealous for the Articles of faith professed by their tradition. They would find it difficult to accept a definition of their beliefs without reference to some creed or confession. Their critics would call them 'cerebral Christians', because they appear to be claiming that accepting the Christian faith is about believing with the mind a set of objective theological propositions.(b) At the other extreme, on the charismatic wing of the Church, creedal statements are considered so unimportant that Christian belief is tested by experience. It is what you feel inside that matters. Here again we see the kind of conflict which existed between the Rationalists and Intuitionists of Hume's day.

Although Hume had been exposed to the atheistic Rationalism which was being introduced on the Continent at a fairly early period in his career; it is of the utmost significance that it did not entice him away from the Intuitionism which had reached him through Francis Hutcheson. Repeatedly in his works we will find him insisting that man's reasoning faculty is so deficient that it is not to be relied upon. Hume was, strictly speaking a sceptic. Distrust of reason lay at the heart of his scepticism. And yet he had taken on board one of the central objectives of the secular Rationalists: which was to see the world through the eyes of mortal man

4. Capaldi op. cit. 33

and his natural observation of it. No longer was it necessary to rely on the Theism of Francis Hutcheson or the Deism of Shaftesbury.

Laird begins his discussion of Hume's Intuitionism by reminding us that in it he had made an attempt to accommodate the new, scientific understanding of man. Laird sees Hume as standing in a second Intuitionist tradition, that of Descartes and Malebranche. According to Laird, both Hume and Hutcheson studied Malebranche closely.

> "Malebranche distinguished between the inclinations and the passions. Of the inclinations he said that the first and greatest was 'L'amour du bien en general' (IV I) given to man by God to lead man to God. The second was 'l'amour propre' (IV 5) and the third an 'amite' towards other men."[5]

But, his greatest debt was to the Intuitionism of Frances Hutcheson - as Laird is able to demonstrate through his use of Leechman, Hutcheson's colleague and biographer. According to Leechman, Hutcheson was convinced that a true scheme of morals "...'must be drawn from proper observations upon the several powers and principles which we are conscious of in our own bosoms, and which must be acknowledged to operate in some degree in the whole human species'."[6] Laird is able to illustrate other ways in which Hume was indebted to Hutcheson. In addition to the above example, which reminds us of Hume's claim in the Enquiry - "Truth is disputable; not taste: what exists in the nature of things is the standard of our judgement; what each man feels within himself is the standard of sentiment."[7]: Laird lists three others, insisting that the last, 'the office of reason' is the example which illustrates the debt to Hutcheson most.

> "According to Hutcheson, the human mind was possessed of certain reflex and 'superior' powers of 'perception', and received a

5. Hume's Philosophy of Human Nature. by J. Laird. London, Methuen and Co. Ltd., in 1932. 207

6. Laird op. cit. 209

7. An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals. by David Hume. Section 1 (Ed. MacIntyre) 25

refined but natural, authentic and original pleasure from beholding the harmony of things (Treatise I 2). This pleasure, he held, was a sort of taste, not knowleldge; and in the instance of beauty could be sharply distinguished 'from any knowledge of the principles, proportions or causes of the usefulness of the object'."[8]

Laird shows how Hutcheson made use of a number of Shaftesbury's ideas, finding that the notion of aesthetic taste which Shaftesbury had incorporated into his Intuitionism fitted in very well with the system which he was developing. According to Laird, Hutcheson had difficulty in accommodating Shaftesbury's further notion that moral judgment should be associated with the aesthetic taste. For Hutcheson, according to this view, a virtuous man must be approved for his own sake and not because of other esoteric, artistic considerations. From his Treatise II, 130,[9] it can be seen that Hutcheson was arguing for a disinterested approbation for the virtuous man, as an instinctive, heart-felt response to the person himself for what he is. It should be noted that Hume found in Hutcheson the belief that this disinterested approbation for the virtuous man is universal, because there is a 'fundamental moral tendency in human nature itself'.[10] In a later analysis of Hume's anthropological model it will be observed that, once the attempt is made to give this 'disinterested approbation' content, it is difficult to maintain its universality in the way Hutcheson meant it. What it means in central Africa may be quite different to what it meant in the Dublin or Glasgow of Hutcheson's day. But it was from that basis that Hutcheson proceeded to argue that the 'desire of the public good of all'[11] is also deep-seated in the human breast.

To the influence of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Malebrache, Laird adds that of Cicero. Hume had introduced to Intuitionism another maxim, which was that 'no action can be virtuous, or morally good, unless there be in human nature some motive to produce it, distinct from the sense of its morality'.

8. Laird op. cit. 213
9. " " " 214
10. " " " 214
11. Treatise, by David Hume. (Ed. MacIntyre) 203

> "Hume had found this argument in Cicero's De Finibus (BI 115) and he clung to it tenaciously. No action', he said (480, cf 478, 483), can be virtuous but so far as it proceeds from a virtuous motive. A virtuous motive, therefore, must precede the regard to the motive'."[12]

As ever, Hume was only satisfied with a demonstration which traced a philosophical proposition back to its origins. In this case he believed that, finally, the 'virtuous motive' was 'kindly affection' "...or else a motive which, through artifice, had been grafted upon a kindly affection or one of its derivatives."[13] Laird argues that Hume meant by 'kindly affection' something akin to 'public-spirited action', because that is how he defines it in his writings, and that premiss was also accepted by the other Intuitionists of Hume's day.

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As we compare Hume's Intuitionism with that of Hutcheson, at first sight they appear very different. Hutcheson's could only be defended from religious presuppositions. To make sense of it we would have to say something like - 'man is a spiritual being because he is the bearer of the Divine Image', or 'man can differentiate between right and wrong because God has given us the Ten Commandments'. Hutcheson's Intuitionism is, therefore, a demonstration that the religious view of man and the world is correct. The fact that man reflects morally is proof of that. Hume's was different because he was attempting to put forward another interpretation of Intuitionism, this time without the religious presuppositions. To make sense of this view all that needs to be said is something like - 'man is morally aware'. Occam's razor could be adapted to read - 'in philosophy, presuppositions should be kept to the minimum'. That is the principle to which most philosophers since Hume's time have sought to adhere. Hume's Intuitionism posed the question - do we in moral philosophy need to say more than 'man is morally aware'?

12. Laird op. cit. 217
13. " " " 218

There is no doubt that Hume did at one stage entertain the hope that Intuitionism would be able to stand on its feet on the basis of a formula similar to 'man is morally aware'; moreover, many advocates of Hume's Intuitionism would defend that view through the modern schools of moral philosophy, such as Utilitarianism and Emotivism. And yet, as we now take a closer look at the differences and similarities between Hutcheson's Intuitionism and Hume's, there is good reason for doubting that Intuitionism was ever able to stand on its own in the way Hume had at first indicated.

The Differences.

The major difference was that Hutcheson's Intuitionism was much more spiritual. He may have aroused the misgivings of the Glasgow Presbytery for expressing views which were unconventional for the Scotland of the time - according to Norman Kemp Smith[14] the Glasgow Presbytery prosecuted Hutcheson for teaching heresy on two counts, viz., 1. that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others: and, 2. that we could have a knowledge of good and evil without any prior knowledge of God - but, on the whole, he himself was highly respected and his work admired. He was in no doubt that man has a soul in the Christian sense. He could not see man, as Hume was sometimes guilty, as little higher than an animal, to be studied in terms of his physiology and environment, without reference to his other spiritual qualities. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, two of the leading Humean scholars of last century, have much to say about Hume's tendency to portray man as not a spiritual being in any true sense, in their lengthy introductions to a two-volume set of Hume's A Treatise of Human Nature. Green and Grose were willing to condemn the view of human nature put forward in the Treatise on that ground. Even if the case argued by Green and Grose now appears a little dated, the Treatise view of human nature would fail to satisfy scholars who, at the present time, would want a full account of the significance

14. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith. London, MacMillan and Co. Ltd., in 1941. 202

of religious belief, moral conviction and inspiration in the field of the Arts. The Treatise view of human nature is often deficient in any such account, not that that ever bothered Hume very much, because he was capable of evading such questions with a formula of words such as - 'it is superfluous to try and demonstrate any such thing'. No serious scholar can, however, be satisfied with such an unphilosophic response. Hutcheson, on the other hand, would have said that moral feeling had been planted in man by the Creator. This capacity was but one of several examples of the presence of the Imago Dei. Human intuitions were a clear evidence of man's God-likeness, and, consequently were to be taken very seriously.

But we cannot refer to Hutcheson's Intuitionism without mentioning as well the spiritual Intuitionism of Shaftesbury and Rousseau. Lord Shaftesbury's opinions had been very influential on the Continent, so that it is almost certain that Rousseau was aware of them, if only at second hand. Needless to say, both Shaftesbury and Rousseau placed a great deal of confidence in the nobility of human intuitions, believing that if education and upbringing were of the right kind, these noble intuitions would blossom. "Like Plato, Shaftesbury realized that you must surround the citizens with an atmosphere of grace and beauty."[15] It is almost certain that Hume was aware of this view at an early stage in his career, because he acquired a three-volume set of Shaftesbury's Characteristics in 1726. Rousseau was convinced that, given the right upbringing, 'Emile' would grow up without the 'vices of adults'. Consequently, we find in Rousseau an emphasis on 'naturalness', which, once re-discovered would eliminate many of society's ills. All this made sense so long as it was accepted that man is higher than an animal, and because of that human intuitions are rooted in his spiritual dimension.

Hume's more secular Intuitionism, in and of itself, was lacking in any clear explanation as to why human intuitions are more to be trusted than let us say - reason. From one point of view it could be argued that Hume

15. Shaftesbury's Second Characters. XII

evasive about this problem, and as the cost for failing to address such a major weakness in any reasoned theory is always high; it must be objected that, at this point, his secular Intuitionism was too subjective.

It must be remembered that he grew up at a time when the application of the scientific method was having an effect on every facet of life. The approach of the Philosophes had fascinated him, as he strove to work out how the application of the scientific method would affect the study of man. For some, science now held the answer to everything. It was being hailed as a new religion. And, although the 18th. century was not the century of the Industrial Revolution, that revolution was now only round the corner.

> "The practical benefits of the new science had been constantly stressed by Bacon, Descartes, and Spinoza, and had already been demonstrated in mining, medicine, and metallurgy, in the arts of warfare, navigation, and architecture."[16]

Hume was very much part of the Scottish Enlightenment, so much so, that, during his own lifetime, Edinburgh was being transformed by proper planning and the introduction of quite outstanding architecture; and Scottish economists such as Adam Smith were setting out the economic structure which would form the basis of Britain's rise as a leading trading nation. With so many impressive evidences of the triumph of science in his native country, it should hardly be wondered that Hume at first placed so much faith in the scientific method.

It was only to be expected that philosophers would ask: 'what bearing does scientific investigation have on the study of man'? As Nicholas Capaldi explains at some length in his volume David Hume, beginning with the Newtonian understanding of how causation is seen to operate in the physical sciences, Hume jumped to the conclusion that a scientific understanding of the human body would finally make clear all the mysteries of human knowledge and belief. Here again we find a very different basis to

16. Hume's Philosophical Development. by J. Noxon. Published by the Oxford Press in 1973.

Intuitionism, to that found in Shaftesbury, Rousseau and Hutcheson. They had begun by stressing the spirituality of the noble human intuitions, placing them almost above investigation. It was as though a good deal of the methodology of secular Rationalism had influenced Hume as he set about the re-construction of Intuitionism. Here we find the empirical Rationalist in Hume.

> "From the beginning he was equally concerned with determining the lawful limits of human knowledge and belief with understanding human preferences, relationships and intuitions. He started with the conviction that experimental psychology would yield a theory of human nature from which solutions to the problems of epistemology and of aesthetics, ethics, and politics, could all be derived."[17]

It would be wrong to suggest that this scientific approach was completely incompatible with Intuitionism. It is, after all, of the greatest importance that Hume adhered so closely to the Intuitionist position, in spite of the extent of his contact with Contienetal Rationalism. In some respects his position would have appeared more consistent if he had gone over to secular Rationalism, because one side of his investigations was better handled from the side of empirical Rationalism. It would not be impossible to re-construct Hume's psychology by giving an account for it which was mainly from this side. In some ways it could be said that his empirical Rationalism militated against the Intuitionism which he was professing to defend. And yet he was still an Intuitionist! It would be quite wrong to put him in the Rationalist camp. That is what he stou tly maintained, and that is what we find bourne out by the relevant sections of his works, such as the central section of the Treatise. He was fully aware of the problems associated with defending the Rationalist position.

Shaftesbury, Rousseau and Hutcheson were not of course religious fanatics. Their Intuitionism depended on religious beliefs, but not that kind of religious mysticism which closed peoples' minds to the

17. Noxon op. cit.

wealth of empirical data which scientific research was uncovering. It is well to remember that the Enlightenment had, in France, brought about polarization between the Philosophes and the religious fanatics. A reaction had set in against religious and academic freedom.

> "In 1685 Louis 14th. had revoked the Edict of Nantes, a course which had forced many leading Protestant scholars and divines to take up residence in more liberal countries, such as England and Holland. The bull Unigenitus in 1713, which condemned 101 propositions in Quesnel's Reflections Morales, struck a blow not only at Jansenism, but at religious freedom in general. From 1727 to 1732 rationalists in France were repelled by the religious hysteria which raged over miracles of healing rumoured to have occured at the grave of Abbe Paris, a Jansenist deacon who had been known in his life for his great charity. In the few years from 1761 to 1766 the French, and particularly Voltaire, were horrified by a series of especially cruel proceedings of the Catholic church."[18]

Shaftesbury's religion would have been intellectual and formal, and very suspicious of fanatical groups. Rousseau's religious beliefs would have been vague, tending towards a religion of nature. Hutcheson would have fitted in much more easily with the more liberal wing of a Protestant national church, in his case the Church of Scotland. It is unlikely that any of them would have been susceptible to the influence of the 'charismatic' Jansenists (although there were many Jansenists who were not of an extreme outlook), nor were they wholehearted supporters of the secular Philosophes.

Hume too never became a Continental Rationalist. Instead, he became part of the "...critical reaction that had already displaced Descartes in favour of Locke and Newton at home."[19] From 'Cogito, ergo sum' Descartes had started to build with "... supreme confidence in pure reason."[20] Hume, however, was to reject the concept of the 'pure objectivity of logical

18. Shaftesbury and the French Deists. by D.B. Schlegel. Published by the University of North Carolina in 1936. 2

19. Noxon op. cit. 2

20. " " " 120

thinking'. He was to begin a 'theory of human nature' which would be the basis for the moral sciences.

Here we see the reason for the considerable difference between Hutcheson's more spiritual, Theistic Intuitionism; and Hume's more secular Intuitionism, which at several points followed Newton's radical interpretation of Aristotelianism. Hume was never able to escape Hutcheson's influence, even although the passage of the years was to see them drift further and further apart. In the end two quite different positions could be identified, so that Hutcheson no longer felt sufficiently confident about Hume's position to allow himself to be associated with it in the eyes of the general public.

The Similarities.

Although for the purposes of this discussion we have agreed that Hutcheson and Hume represented two quite different Intuitionisms, one Christian and the other secular, further investigation will demonstrate that the attempt to keep them separate was never entirely successful. At one point Hume may have been convinced that his Intuitionism could stand on its own.

> "...he hoped to derive passion and action, love, pride, compassion, benevolence, and the sense of justice, obligation, law and property, from the elemental forces of pleasure and pain and the principle of association taken to be analagous to the axioms of motion and the force of gravity."[21]

Having set out with the intention of creating a new naturalistic world Hume had to sort out the mind-body relationship. While he may have explored the mind-body relationship in greater depth than Hutcheson, this knowledge still did not answer the questions which were bound up with ethical and moral issues. To judge the success of Hume's attempt to build afresh, it is important to follow again his account of how we form

21. Noxon op. cit. 120

our beliefs, from the foundation up.

1. Several of the concepts which Hume was ready to employ to describe what happens when we form beliefs were already in circulation, some of them introduced by Christian philosophers who were sometimes accused by him of having developed secular leanings! "...the things one perceives are not physical objects but merely perceptions."[22]

Hume's 'phenomenalism' has been debated at some length, and the precise details are not of importance to this discussion. For him 'perceptions' demonstrated how beliefs are formed in the brain and the nervous system. It could be argued that he was making a case for the reliability of the senses themselves, because his understanding of 'perceptions' made it possible for him to show how information passed into the brain to be turned there into, among other things, 'beliefs'. It was probably his expectation that within his lifetime psychology would have advanced to the point where it would be possible to account from it, all the workings of the mind. He may have surmized that the conclusion of this investigation would be the demonstration of how 'man's moral faculty works'. But it was not very long before it was clear to Hume himself that this was impossible, because, even if the senses are reliable, we still know nothing about their powers nor the range of information which may pass through them into the mind in the course of human experience. In other words, beliefs have to do with Articles of Faith written down in documents called Creeds, and not just the process by which information passes through the senses into the mind.

2. Ideas, according to Hume, are one stage further on. First we have 'perceptions' and then 'ideas'. In addition he did recognize a category of ideas which are other than 'impressions and images'. N.K. Smith suggests that Hume was in considerable confusion over the distinction:-

"...he employs the term 'impression' and 'idea' as if they were

22. Hume's Philosophy of Mind. by J. Bricke. Published by the Edinburgh University Press in 1980.

> interchangeable with the terms that signify independently existing bodies. He even goes so far as to speak of impressions acting on the sense organs."[23]

Both Berkley and Hume, according to N.K. Smith, had a major problem defining what they called an 'idea' "...if we have no other means of doing so than that of taking a particular idea as representative of others resembling it."[24] The farthest Berkley and Hume could progress was to take "...a particular idea as representative of others resembling it."[25]

3. Finally, Hume's system led to 'beliefs'. Impressions, according to this system, were formed at the entrance of the senses into the mind. 'Ideas' required a little more reflection, and were one stage beyond perceptions. Beliefs, however, were formed much deeper in the consciousness, although Hume may still have expected to find a causal mechanism by which to account for them.

> "He wavers between looking for an internal difference between the two, such as the superior vivacity of the idea that is the belief; and a difference in characteristic effects, as when he says that beliefs are, and mere thoughts not, 'the governing principles of our actions'. His philosophical approach inclines him to look for the internal difference, his accumen to look for the effects of belief upon 'behaviour'."[26]

By restricting the discussion to one definition of 'belief' it is possible to attempt a demonstration of a causal connection.

> "...he is able to describe belief as consisting simply in the enlivening of ideas, and so to deal with it on the lines of strict analogy with his doctrine of sympathy. The only difference between sense-perception and ideas, he would seem to be maintaining, is a difference of force and liveliness. All that is necessary for belief, and what constitutes it, is that ideas should through

23.	Smith	op. cit.	113
24.	"	" "	260
25.	"	" "	260
26.	Bricke	op. cit.	121

relation to impressions receive the required increment of vivacity."[27]

Hume may have felt that such a demonstration of the causal mechanism by which beliefs are formed in the nervous system was a great achievement. It formed the foundation for his new interpretation of Intuitionism. The physiological processes which occur when we feel certain emotions or think certain thoughts were being laid bare. This new Intuitionism was to begin with what is actually taking place within us when we say - 'I ought to do such-and-such'; rather than what a fusty old religious book or a volume on moral philosophy says that we sould feel about certain moral obligations. In that respect Hume's and Hutcheson's starting-points were completely different. Hume was endeavouring to begin with the building-blocks of feelings and beliefs: Hutcheson with fixed moral obligations. As was stated on page 67, Hume was attempting to defend his Intuitionism from the bare premiss 'man is morally aware' (or something simlar); whereas Hutcheson really required two further propositions - a) 'man is a moral being because he is the bearer of the Divine Image', or, b) 'man can differentiate between right and wrong because God has given us the Ten Commandments' (or something similar).

And yet, the basic building-blocks with which Hume had started could not provide him with the material which he needed to demonstrate that 'man is morally aware'; only 'man is aware'. He could say that man feels, thinks, believes and is totally aware; but not that he is 'morally' aware. And that was too little for Hume's purposes. He wanted to be able to say that man is morally aware, and therefore, his moral responses are to be accepted at face value and trusted. That is what Rousseau said, but not from a secular standpoint. Here is where we must ask - how achievable is a secular Intuitionism?

There can be no serious doubt that Hume was fully cognisant of this difficulty, because the inadmissibility of deriving an 'ought' - in this instance 'man is morally aware' from an 'is' - in this instance 'man is aware', was a question on which he was unusually sensitive. He was only

27. Smith op. cit. 443

too well aware that there is all the difference in the world between saying 'man is morally aware' and merely 'man is aware'. An Intuitionism based on the latter alone is certainly conceivable, but that was not the kind of Intuitionism which he wanted to argue for. If we examine his own moral philosophy it will become apparent that he had to be able to say 'man is morally aware'.

> "Let a man's insensibility be ever so great, he must often be touched with the images of Right and Wrong; and let his prejudices be ever so obstinate, he must observe, that others are susceptible of like impressions."[28]

For Hume this is all so self-evident that it can safely be taken for granted. That is how he writes about it for most of the time. Only when cornered was he forced to admit the extent of the problem, and then he would offer the kind of get-out argument to which Berkeley objected. The human faculties which had been good enough to allow Hume to discourse effortlessly at length on all kinds of subjects, are suddenly found to be not suited to the solving of the above problem!

> "Hume constantly employs that species of sceptical argument to which Berkeley in particular objected, the argument that the faculties we have are few, and those designed by nature for the support and pleasures of life, and not to penetrate into the inward essence and constitution of things..."[29]

Not that in this case it matters very much, because warnings against committing the Naturalistic Fallacy are so forceful in his writings. On the basis of these warnings alone it should be impossible to even attempt to infer that 'man is aware' can be read as 'man is morally aware'. If anything, Hume was anxious to drive a wedge between 'moral distinctions' and 'reason'. Much of Book I partl of the Treatise is taken up with defending that view:-

> "Those who affirm that virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason;

28. Enquiry op. cit. (edited by A. MacIntyre) 23

29. Hume's Intentions. by J. Passmore. Published by Duckworth in 1980. 141

that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself: All these systems concur in the opinion, that morality, like truth, is discern'd merely by ideas, and by their juxta-position and comparison. In order, therefore, to judge of these systems, we need only consider, whether it be possible, from reason alone, to distinguish betwixt moral good and evil, or whether there must concur some other principles to enable us to make that distinction.

If morality had naturally no influence on human passions and actions 'twere in vain to take such pains to inculcate it; and nothing wou'd be more fruitless than that multitude of rules and precepts, with which all moralists abound. Philosophy is commonly divided into 'speculative' and 'practical'; and as morality is always comprehended under the latter division, 'tis supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding. And this is confirm'd by common experience, which informs us, that men are often govern'd by their duties, and are deter'd from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impell'd to others by that of obligation.

Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be deriv'd from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason."[30]

If reason in this context is equated with Hume's 'is', and, morals with his 'ought', then we can see from the above passage how wide the gap between the two is in his thinking.

30. Treatise op. cit. (Ed. MacIntyre) 184

Whether or not his imaginative account of the way in which the signals pass through the senses and etch themselves on the memory to form a 'belief' is sound or not, this information tells us nothing if 'memory' or 'reason' can have no significant influence on the rules of morality.

> "Here, as in the sphere of ethics and aesthetics, the function of philosophical enquiry, as Hume conceived it, is not to justify our ultimate beliefs, but only to trace them to their sources in the constitution of our human nature, and to show how, aided by reason, though themselves derective of it, they condition and make possible the de-facto experience which is at once the subject-matter of philosophy and that by which its judgements alone can be tested."[31]

And so the mechanism by which beliefs are formed in the nervous system has little to say to us about, e.g. moral obligation. We may in any case only be able to trace back these beliefs so far, because they are not simple and tend to become mixed up with the information already present in the mind. It is important to understand the mechanism and the way in which Hume uses it as the foundation for his Intuitionism, but he himself was aware that it has very little light to cast on answering the question - 'why is man morally aware'? That is why we need to go back to the earlier section which deals more broadly with the formation of our beliefs (pages 31-46). In that section it was stated that we need to give up any pretence that we can discover someone's beliefs by examining them physically; instead Hume accepted that education, pleasure and pain, reason and association etc., are the factors which play a leading role in the formation of our beliefs. Already the distance between Hutcheson's Intuitionism and Hume's is narrowing. It is likely that Hutcheson could have accepted most of Hume's account, both in the basic mechanism theory as well as in the wider educational theory, with one essential difference between them. Whereas Hutcheson was able to explain why 'man is morally aware', Hume was not. Of what

31. Smith op. cit.

value then was Hume's secular version of Intuitionism?

If it is remembered that he accepted the spiritual Intuitionism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson more or less on trust, and that he remained an Intuitionist after all his studies and travels, then, it can be seen that the secular interpretation was attempted after he was already part of the Intuitionist tradition. This attempt followed his contact with the Philosophes when the French Enlightenment was at its height for reasons which are perfectly understandable. If, through it all Hume remained an Intuitionist rather than adopt the secular Rationalism of the Philosophes, whom he claimed to admire and who heaped so much praise on him, does the 'secular' aspect of his Intuitionism deserve to be taken seriously? There is a strong case for arguing that it should not. But it has, and that is why it is now necessary to indicate the dependence of his secular Intuitionism on Hutcheson's spiritual Intuitionism, as well as why Hume's successors have been wrong to follow him so so closely.

Both Hutcheson and Hume were endeavouring to say - 'man is morally aware'. Because of that T.D. Campbell was able to claim:-

> "It is now generally acknowledged that Hutcheson is the 'father' of the Scottish Enlightenment. Hume's ethics are largely Hutchesonian and Kemp Smith's view that Hutcheson's sentimentalist approach to moral theory was the inspiration for Hume's entire epistemology still stands..."[32]

Against Hobbes's claim that all human action is self-interest, Hutcheson argued that "...men are capable of disinterested love, or 'the desire of and delight in the Good of others'."[33] In this he was anxious to show that benevolence should be disinterested; i.e., "...not from the pleasure the benevolent person gets from seeing others happy, since such pleasure presupposes a prior desire that they be happy; hence the 'disinterestedness' of benevolence, an affection which he compares to

32. The Origins and Nature of the Scottish Enlightenment. Edited by T.D. Campbell. Edinburgh, John Donald Publishers in 1982. 167

33. Campbell op. cit. 168

the force of gravity in that it is stronger or weaker in proportion to the nearness or distance of its object and operates whenever there is no equal or stronger countervailing force."[34]

For Hutcheson, benevolent affection is closely related to virtue, and consequently actions which proceed from it are to be approved. It should be noticed that in section II of the Treatise, very close to the beginning, Hume devotes a lot of discussion to Benevolence, and to the attitudes and actions which proceed from it.-

> "The epithets sociable, good-natured, humane, merciful, grateful, friendly, generous, beneficent, or their equivalents, are known in all languages, and universally express the highest merit, which human nature is capable of attaining."[35]

Men, however, according to Hutcheson, are also motivated by self-love, so that there are "...'two forces compelling the same body to motion' or 'two calm natural determinations of the will...an invariable constant impulse towards one's own perfection and happiness of the highest kind...'"

"..'the other determination alleged is toward the universal happiness of others'."[36] It is known that Bishop Butler's Sermons influenced Hutcheson's later work, and he may have met the Bishop when he was in Dublin working on the Treatise. Self-love and the desire for the universal happiness of others appear at first sight to be in conflict, but Hutcheson sets out to demonstrate that that need not be the case. "It is, for him, a prime aim of moral philosophy to show that universal benevolence tends to the happiness of the benevolent."[37] Is Hutcheson then the founder of Utilitarianism? Many of the themes which Hutcheson develops in the Inquiry are presented in a polished form in Hume's Treatise.[38]

In addition to the influence of Bishop Butler's Sermons on Hutcheson, Shaftesbury's influence was, as has been noted already, even more

34. Campbell op. cit. 168
35. Enquiry op. cit. (Section II, Part 1) edited by A. MacIntyre
36. Campbell op. cit. 169
37. " " " 169
38. A Dialogue. by David Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) 157

significant. "It has been said of Spinoza that he was intoxicated with the idea of God. It might be said with equal truth of Shaftesbury that he was intoxicated with the idea of Virtue, and Virtue with him meant, above all things, benevolence and care for others."[39] For Shaftesbury, God is "...all wise, all just, and all merciful, governing the world providentially for the best..."[40] and this system of theology was so much a part of his ethics and view of society that "...this Dialogue may, perhaps, justly be viewed as simply extending and confirming the argument contained in the Inquiry concerning Virtue. What the constitution of Man was designed to be, and ought to be, that the constitution of Nature actually is. Hence Virtue obtains the sanctions of Religion, while Religion itself is but the recognition and imitation of Supreme Goodness."[41]

If the belief in an all wise, all just and all merciful God was so important to Shaftesbury and then Hutcheson in their understanding of Virtue; in what sense is it admissible to suggest that Hume could dispense with it? The bulk of the material found in Hume's Enquiry can be traced to the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, albeit he altered the structure of the presentation and added some novel and valuable contributions of his own. His erudition and command of his subject mark out his works as the equal of those of his illustrious mentors. In them he is deliberately attempting to pioneer a new trail. His works are in many ways different. The role of religious belief in the ethical system which he was developing is played down all the time. Nevertheless, these works are closely related to those of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. They have left out the references to religious belief, but the essential arguments have altered very little. And that serves to raise the question of how far is it possible for one moral philosopher to lean so heavily on the work of two such important predecessors, and still reject one of their central convictions? Did Hume succeed in fact in formulating a secular Intuitionism?

This is a very important question for many in the field of moral philosophy

39. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. by T. Fowler. London, Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington in 1882. 37

40. Fowler op. cit. 37

41. " " " 63

today. The appeal of Hume's Intuitionism has been immense. In the words of one scholar, "When Bentham read this part of the Treatise he said that he felt 'as if scales had fallen from his eyes'..."[42] Many scholars have been convinced that Hume's attempt did succeed, and, even although they may qualify that claim by saying that he made some serious mistakes which have to be removed from his system, and that he was often not systematic and this led to major inconsistencies; they still hold to the view that the position for which he was aiming at is tenable, and that he made huge strides towards establishing it.

We have been examining that view closely, and the more minutely that view is analysed the less it seems to stand up. There can be no doubt that Hume was a distinguished Intuitionist. He was that mainly because of his educational background and his contact with Francis Hutcheson. He was also that by choice. It would not have been possible for him to have maintained that position so consistenly and eloquently over such a long and varied career, had he not been thoroughly convinced of the soundness of its central arguments. The difficulty lies in the impression which is left when he develops these arguments most soundly and convincingly. He does not sound at all like one of the Philosophes who was in the vanguard of the secular tide on the Continent which threatened to sweep away all religious belief. He sounds in fact like a Shaftesbury or a Hutcheson, developing an Intuitionism which started off with religious beliefs as an essential part of it, but now has had these removed: their removal having left behind spaces which, somehow, need to be filled in. As we have seen already, Hume wanted to make a smooth transition from 'man is aware' to 'man is morally aware'. For reasons which are stated with great force and clarity, he insisted in his own works that that kind of movement is inadmissible; because, to use the language of moral philosophy, 'you can't derive an ought from an is'.[43] We should be grateful to him, that, although it is a point against his own position he is prepared to insist on it so strictly. After his exhaustive study of the information which physiology was

42. Laird op. cit. 219

43. The Naturalistic Fallacy. Contemporary Moral Philosophy G.J. Warnock, London, Macmillan, 1967. 62

bringing to light, he began to appreciate the limitations of science. It is probably true to say that one of the great contributions which he made to the scholarship of his day was to put the philosophical study of psychology on a proper footing, but this did nothing to advance the study of moral questions as such. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson had said loudly and clearly - 'man is morally aware' - and they had their religious beliefs to explain why that is so. They had no difficulty in saying that there is a moral sense within the heart of man, just as they had no difficulty in saying that the world as man's environment is charged with moral implications. Hume was endeavouring to say the same thing, only in his case these claims just seemed to hang in the air. Most frustratingly of all, when pinned down about this difficulty he would not face the problem.

What then is the gap which separates Hutcheson's Intuitionism from Hume's? If all are agreed that Hume was an Intuitionist in the Shaftesbury-Hutcheson tradition, then it is questionable whether any gap exists at all. A strong case could be made for insisting that there was a clear distinction between the secular Rationalism of some of the Philosophes and British Intuitionism, because there the problem is not how the transition is made from 'man is aware' to 'man is morally aware'. A number of atheistic Rationalists appear not to have been unduly concerned about whether or not man is morally aware. But that issue could not be ducked within the Intuitionist camp. Hume had no desire to evade the discussion of moral questions. For him the discussion of moral questions was of the greatest importance. And yet, having attempted to remove the religious element from Intuitionism, he was left saying something like - 'man is morally aware, although we can't say why'. Not the kind of answer to impress any type of Rationalist!

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When attempting to define 'Intuitionism', it has been argued in the thesis that the definition originated with Shaftesbury and was passed to Hutcheson and Hume. All three appear to be in agreement that we can differentiate between right and wrong because we have a moral constitution. We will presently observe that Shaftesbury in his Characteristics wrote that:- "Sense of Right and Wrong therefore being as natural to us as Natural Affection itself, and being the first Principle in our constitution and make." In the introduction to Hutcheson's An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. he made the following acknowledgement:- "(In two Treatises, In which the Principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are explain'd and Defended etc.)" and in the Preface he asserts:- "There is no part of Philosophy of more importance,than a just knowledge of human Nature, and its various Powers and Dispositions." On page 78 of the thesis there can be found the start of a lengthy quotation from Hume's Treatise, which concludes with a defence of Intuitionism against Rationalism:- "Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows, that they cannot be deriv'd from reason, and that because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence." There exists a considerable body of written material to show that all three were at some stage important representatives of the Intuitionist school. The conviction that Hume's Intuitionism was basically secular is discussed at length in the thesis (p. 62 - 68), leading to the conclusion that he may never have been satisfied that this interpretation had succeeded.

In a BBC Radio Scotland broadcast on Francis Hutcheson, ProfessorBroadie of Glasgow University made the claim that Hutcheson should not be thought of merely as a follower of the position taken up in Shaftesbury's Intuitionism, because he may also have felt some sympathy for 'Theistic Rationalism'. Professor Broadie claimed that Hutcheson was part of the Realist Scottish

tradition - a tradition which went as far back as Duns Scotus and the Scottish scholarship of the Middle Ages. The Realists, according to ProfessorBroadie, believed that moral qualities were real qualities which existed in the world. Reference is made to Hume's need for 'abstract moral standards' in the thesis (p. 53).

As Hutcheson expressed his indebtedness to Shaftesbury's Intuitionism in his introduction to - An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue, it is safe to conclude that he was in some sense an Intuitionist. And, as there is a striking similarity between the writings of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume, there is also a strong case for grouping them together as the leading philosophers of Intuitionism.

However, as Hutcheson remained the most orthodox Theist of the three, it is also highly probable that the Realist approach continued to influence his outlook. It could have been that he felt that the two systems were complementary, the 'real moral qualities which existed in the world' confirming the moral convictions of the individual.

In the same BBC Scotland Radio broadcast, Professor Stuart of Lancaster University argued that Hutcheson also believed in the Moral Sense theory, which held that we can have a conception of goodness in people because we have a moral sense. This moral sense was thought to be similar to our other senses on which light, heat, colour etc., impinge. Moral goodness was like another external source, which could be recognized by the human moral sense. So that Professors Brodie and Stuart appear to be arguing that Hutcheson relied on two systems. First, the Realism of the Scottish philosophical tradition; and, second, the Moral Sense theory, which comes closer to Shaftesbury's Intuitionism.

It was this latter view which featured in the writings of Hutcheson which influenced Hume, and which is of importance for the interpretation which has been presented in the thesis. A sample of these writings can be found in the primary sources which are quoted in this section.

In Mossner's The Life of David Hume. (op. cit. p. 31) we are told that "In 1726 Hume acquired a three volume set of Shaftesbury's Characteristics..." so that a study of the way in which these volumes may have influenced his thinking on the question of Intuitionism is an appropriate starting point for this section. Volume I is the 1711, Dundee edition. On page 39 we have a key Intuitionist affirmation that our Notion of what is morally excellent is not derived from untrustworthy Reason. On the same page we are told that "...God is so good, as to exceed the very best of us in Goodness." Volume II begins with Treatise IV, viz. an Inquiry concerning Virtue or Merit, and the year of publication is 1709.

This section contains a disclaimer about the need for religious belief to be virtuous, and, indeed, refers to the harmful influence of some religions; themes which are frequent in Hume's writings. "Religion and Virtue appear so nearly related, that they are generally presumed inseparable Companions." (p.5) "We have known People, who having the Appearance of great Zeal in Religion, have yet shown themselves extremely degenerate and corrupt." (p. 6) On page 11 Shaftesbury attempts a definition of Theism. "To believe therefore that everything is govern'd, oder'd, or regulated for the best, by a designing Principle, or Mind, necessarily good and permanent, is to be a perfect THEIST."

On human nature, we find an echo of the Deistic approach in "Nothing is more just than a known saying 'That it is as hard to 'find a man wholly Ill, as wholly Good:'..." Again in Part III Sec. 1 we find an account of right and wrong which makes no reference to revealed religion. "The Nature of Virtue consisting (as has been explain'd) in a certain just Disposition, or proportionable Affection of a rational Creature towards the Moral Objects of Right and Wrong; nothing can possibly in such a Creature exclude a Principle of Virtue, or render it ineffectual..." (p. 40) And, "...nothing can assist or advance the Principle of Virtue, but what either in some manner nourishes and promotes a Sense of Right and Wrong;..."

This sense is natural to us. "Sense of Right and Wrong therefore being as natural to us as Natural Affection itself, and being the first Principle in our constitution and Make." (p. 44) Then Nature is dicussed in relation to the force of custom or education. "As the second Case, viz. The wrong Sense or false Imagination of Right and Wrong. This can proceed only from the Force of Custom and Education in opposition to Nature." (p.45) He then offers the view that it is possible for a Deity to be blamed for beliefs that are unacceptable. "For whenever any thing in its nature odious and abominable is by Religion advanc'd, as the suppos'd Will or Pleasure of a Supreme Deity, if in the eye of the Believer it appears not indeed in any respect the less ill or odious on this account; then must the Deity of necessity bear the blame, and be considered as a Being naturally ill and odious..." (p. 47)

> "For instance: if Jupiter be He that is ador'd and reverenc'd; and if his History represents him amorously inclin'd, and permitting his Desires of this kind to wander in the loosest Manner; 'tis impossible but his Worshippers believing this History to be literally and strictly true, must of course be taught a greater love of amorous and wanton Acts."

He discusses the example of a believer in a strange Deity who must always maintain his own sense of right and wrong. "If in following the Precepts of his suppos'd God, or doing what he esteems necessary towards the satisfying of such his Deity, he is compell'd on only by Fear, and contrary to his Inclination, performs an Act which he secretly detests as barbarous and unnatural; then has he an Apprehension or Sense still of Right and Wrong..." So that the believer retains an independent sense of right and wrong. "For whoever thinks there is a God, and pretends formally to believe that he is just and good, must suppose that there is independently such things as Justice and Injustice, Truth and Falsehood, Right and Wrong; according to which he pronounces that God is just, righteous, and true." (p. 50) He then makes a somewhat astonishing claim:- "...Religion (according as the

kind may prove) is capable of doing great Good, or Harm; and Atheism nothing positive either way." (p. 51) That is a statement which comes close to what Philo was to say in the Dialogues. He then claims that "... false Religion or fantastical Opinion, (is) deriv'd commonly from Superstition and Credulity." (p. 52) Another theme which can be found in Hume.

In Section III ...the Natural Sense of Right and Wrong, he claims that "...to have a Sense of Right and Wrong, before such time as he may have any settl'd Notion of a God, is what will hardly be question'd: ..." (p. 53) And yet this was the very question which the Glasgow Presbytery raised with Francis Hutcheson, so that already we find the seeds of a Secular Intuitionism which we find in the early Hume. Belief in God appears to depend on preconceived ideas about perfection. "Excellency and Worth, as thinking it the perfection of Nature to imitate and resemble him." (p. 54) "If there be a Belief or Conception of a Deity... a concern for the good of all, and an affection of Benevolence and Love towards the Whole; such an example (will serve to increase) ...the Affection towards Virtue..." (p. 56)

Although many of his contemporaries would have suspected him of expressing Deism, he continues:- "For where the Theistical Belief is intire and perfect there must be a steddy Opinion of the Superintendency of a Supreme Being, a Witness and Spectator of human Life, and conscious of all that is felt or acted in the Universe." (p.57) This is a movement back to the personal God of revealed religion. He continues "...'tis very apparent how far conducting a perfect Theism must be to Virtue, and how great a Deficiency there is in Atheism." (p. 57).

In Book II Part I Section I he develops two other themes which are important in Intuitionism. a) "We have found, that to deserve the name Good or Virtuous, a Creature must have all his Inclinations and Affections, his Dispositions of Mind and Temper, suitable and agreeing with the good of his Kind..." (p. 77) "To stand thus well affected, and to have one's Affections right and intire, not only in respect of one's self, but of

Society and the Publick: This is Rectitude, Integrity, or Virtue." There is here an emphasis on education, upbringing and tradition which we will also find in Hutcheson. b) The social aspect of virtue. "Nor will any one deny that this Affection of a Creature towards the good of the Species or common Nature, as is proper and natural to him as it is to any Organ, Part or Member of an Animal-Body." (p. 78)

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An early work by Francis Hutcheson which influenced Hume in his writing of the Treatise was An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. (In two Treatises, In which the Principles of the late Earl of Shaftesbury are explain'd and Defended, against the Author of the Fable of the Bees:

and the

Ideas of Moral Good and Evil are established, According to the Sentiments of the Ancient Moralists.

With an Attempt to introduce a Mathematical Calculation in subjects of Morality.)

by Francis Hutcheson, LLD, London 1725 edition.

In the Preface we find the assertion:- "There is no part of Philosophy of more importance, than a just Knowledge of human Nature, and its various Powers and Dispositions." (p. III) The starting point could be said to be human nature.

It is further claimed that human nature is influenced considerably by what causes us pleasure and pain. "In reflecting upon our external Senses, we plainly see, that our Perceptions of Pleasure or Pain, do not depend directly on our Will. Objects do not please us according as we incline they should: The preference of some Objects necessarily pleases us; nor can we by our Will, any otherwise procure Pleasure, or avoid Pain, than by procuring the former kind of Objects, and avoiding the latter: by the very Frame of our Nature the one is made the occasion of Delight, and the other of Dissatisfaction." (p. V)

These observations are given a physical explanation. "The same Observation will hold in all our other Pleasures and Pains; for there are many other

Objects, which please, or displease us necessarily, as material Objects do when they operate upon our Organs of Sense. There is scarcely any Object which our Minds are employ'd about, which is not thus Constituted the necessary occasion of some Pleasure or Pain: Thus we shall find ourselves pleas'd with a regular Form, a piece of Architecture, or Painting, a Composition of Notes, a Theorem, an Action, an Affection, a Character: and we are conscious that this Pleasure necessarily arises from the Contemplation of the Idea ... the Pleasure arises from some Uniformity, Order, Arrangement, Imitation; and not from the simple Ideas of Colour, or Sound, or mode of Extension separately consider'd." (P. VI) Those who have studies Hume's Treatise will see at once that here we are on familiar territory.

If that preceding section dealt with one aspect of the mechanism of perception, another seeks to define moral sense. "THESE determinations to be pleas'd with any Forms or Ideas which occur to our Observation, the Author chuses to call SENSES; distinguishing them from the Powers which commonly go by that Name, by calling our Power of perceiving the Beauty of Regularity, Order, Harmony, an Internal Sense; and that Determination to be pleas'd with the Contemplation of those affections, Actions, or Characters of rational Agents, which we call virtuous, he marks by the name of a MORAL SENSE."

So far the emphasis has been on human nature by itself, but now Hutcheson attributes its constitution to the Author of Nature:-

> " HIS principal Design is to show,
> ' That human nature was not left quite
> ' indifferent in the affair of Virtue, to
> ' form to itself Observations concerning
> ' the Advantage or Disadvantage of Ac-
> ' tions and accordingly to regulate its
> ' Conduct. "The weakness of our Reason, and the evocations arising from

the Infirmity and Necessitys of our Nature, are so great, that very few of Mankind could have form'd those long Deductions of Reason, which may show some Actions to be in the whole advantageous to the Agent, and their Contrarys pernicious. The Author of Nature has much better furnish'd us for a virtous Conduct, than our Moralists seem to imagine, by almost as quick and powerful

Instructions, as we have for the preservation of our Bodys. He has made Virtue a lovely Form, to excite our pursuit of it; and has given us strong Affections to be the Springs of each virtuous Action." (p. VIII)

Hutcheson felt that Shaftesbury placed a correct emphasis on the aesthetic element. " Our Gentlemen of good Taste can tell us of a great many Senses, Tastes, and Relishes for Beauty, Harmony, Imitation in Painting and Poetry; and may not we find too in Mankind a Relish for a Beauty in Characters, in manners? I doubt we have made Philosophy, as well as Religion, by our foolish management of it, so austere and ungainly in Form, that a Gentleman cannot easily bring himself to like it; and those who are Strangers to it, can scarcely bear to hear our Description of it: So much is it changed from what was once was the delight of fine Gentlemen among the Antients, and their Recreation after the Hurry of publick Affairs!" (p. VIII)

For Hutcheson the way in which human intuition is formed, e.g., by upbringing and education, has a vital bearing on the development of our senses. "THE proper Occasions of Perception by the external Senses, occur to us as soon as we come into the World; and thence perhaps we easily look upon these Senses to be natural: but the Objects of the superior Senses of Beauty and Virtue generally do not. It is probably some time before Children do reflect or at least let us know that they reflect upon Proportion and Similitude; upon Affections, Characters, Tempers; or come to know the external Actions which are Evidences of them: And hence we imagine that their Sense of Beauty and their Moral Sentiments of Actions, must be entirely owing to Instruction and Education; whereas it is full as easy to concieve, how a Character, a Temper, as soon as they are observ'd, may be constituted by NATURE the necessary occasion of Pleasure, or an Object of Approbation, as a Taste or a Sound; tho it be the same time before these Objects present themselves to our Observation." (p. IX)

In Treatise I viz. An Inquiry concerning Beauty, Order Ec, we find an account of perception which similar to that put forward in Hume's Treatise.

Art. I "Those Ideas that are rais'd in the Mind upon the presence of external Objects, and their acting upon our Bodys, are called Sensations. We find that the Mind in such Cases is passive, and has not the Power directly to prevent the Perception or Idea, or to vary it at its Reception, as long as we continue our Bodys in a state fit to be acted upon by the external Object." (p. 1)

In Sect. III Of the Beauty of Theorems, there is a reference to gravitation "...in Sir Isaac Newton's Scheme..." (p. 30) Hutcheson supposes the Author of Nature benevolent, "... and then indeed the Happiness of Mankind is desirable or Good to the Supreme Cause; and that Form which pleases us, is an argument of his Wisdom." (p. 60) "... since upon the supposition of a Benevolent Deity, all the apparent Beauty produc'd is an Evidence of the Execution of a Benevolent Design, to give him the Pleasures of Beauty." For Hume, especially in the Dialogues, that view of the deity and His Creation is not without major problems, but with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson it was a basic presupposition in their ontology. On page 84 Hutcheson states that "...Education and Custom may influence our internal Senses." Thus human intuition does not come into existence in a vacuum, but presupposes the influence of upbringing and education. On page 39 of the thesis reference was made to the importance which Hume attached to education in the forming of our beliefs.

In the Treatise II viz. an Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good, a section entitled - an Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil - tells us that "The Word Moral Goodness, denotes our Idea of some Quality apprehended in Actions, which procures Approbation and Love toward the Actor, from those who receive no Advantage by the Action. Moral Evil denotes our Idea of a contrary Quality, which excites Aversion, and Dislike toward the Actor..." (p. 101) Hutcheson goes on to suggest that such a distinction between good and evil is universal, and the reason for believing that Hume shared that view is discussed in the thesis p. 53f.

"These Descriptions seem to contain an universally acknowledg'd Difference of moral Good and Evil, from Natural. Allmen who speak of moral Good acknowledge that it produces Love toward those we apprehend possess'd of it; whereas natural Good does not. In this matter Men must consult their own Breasts." That last piece of advice is very typical of the Hume method.

In Sect. II Concerning the immediate Motive to virtuous Action, Hutcheson discusses the religious explanation. The younger Hume, it is argued in the thesis, attempted to separate the'virtuous motive' from religion, but it is argued that he was not satisfied with the result. Here is Hutcheson's view:- "All the Actions counted religious in any Country are supposed to follow from some Affections toward the Deity; and whatever we call social Virtue, will still suppose to flow from Affections toward our Fellow-Creatures; for in this all seem to agree,

> ' That external Motions, when accompany'd with no
> ' Affections towards God or Man, or
> ' evidencing no Want of the expected Af-
> ' fections towards either, can have no moral
> ' Good or Evil in them. ' (p. 125)

According to Hutcheson it is the "...very Frame of our Nature (which) determines us to love or hate, ..." (p. 128): a manner of expression very typical of Hume. In III Hutcheson states, "As to the Love of Benevolence, the very Name excludes Self-Interest." (p. 129) The passage "...so that all those kind Affections which incline us to make others happy, and all Actions suppos'd to flow from such Affections, appear morally Good..." (p. 150) is very reminiscent of Section II of Hume's Treatise , Part I Of Benevolence.

In the Preface of Hutcheson's Inquiry on Intuitionism, he shows the limitations of reason. "The weakness of our Reason, and the evocations arising from the Infirmity and Necessity of our Nature, are so great, that very few of Mankind could have form'd those long Deductions of Reason..." (p. VII)

In A System of Moral Philosophy*, London Vol I Hutcheson struck a more controversial note, when in Book I, Concerning the Constitution of Human Nature and the Supreme Good, he wrote:- "The intention of moral philosophy is to direct men to that course of action which tends most effectually to promote their greatest happiness and perfection; as far as it can be done by observations and conclusions discoverable from the constitution of nature, without any aids of supernatural revelation; these maxims, or rules of conduct are therefore reputed as laws of Nature, and the system or collection of them is called the LAW OF NATURE." (p. 1) This was probably the kind of shift of emphasis which brought Hutcheson into trouble with Glasgow Presbytery. It appears to be a shift towards Deism, at the very least, because the laws of nature in question could be thought to operate quite without any need for supernatural revelation. Very probably that is not what Hutcheson meant, but this passage was open to that kind of interpretation. The aim is to "...enquire into the several powers and dispositions of the species..." "...that we may discover what is its supreme happiness and perfection..." (p.2) which may amount to nothing more than unaided human observation of what contributes to that estate.

What takes place in the mind is also of great importance:- "These two powers of perception, sensation and consciousness, introduce into the mind all its materials of knowledge." (p. 6) People are governed by two impulses:- "First, an invariable constant impulse toward one's own perfection and happiness of the highest kind." "The other determination alleged is toward the Universal happiness of others." (p. 9) As Hume is often associated with the formulation of the 'greatest happiness' principle, perhaps it is as well to note that Hutcheson refers to something which sounds like it. He observes that "...almost all other animals, as soon as they come to light, exercising their several powers by like instincts in the way that the Author of Nature intended;..." (p. 21) He mentions that, according to Aristotle, it was God who implanted this principle. (p.26)

* London 1755

Hutcheson affirms that we possess a moral faculty "... and the moral faculty by which we judge of all the motions of the will." (p.41) This could have been the human attribute Hume had in mind when he identified moral decision-making with the powers of the mind, such as memory and the forming of beliefs.

Shaftesbury's concept of the disinterested performance of duty appears in the following section:- "From self-love we desire only the means of our own happiness. Now the actual happiness of others is neither the cause nor means of obtaining self-approbation, nor rewards from God. Our hearts approve us, and God promises rewards to us, not because others are in fact happy, but because we have such kind dispositions, and act our parts well in their behalf, whether in the event they are happy or not." (p. 45)

Hutcheson, in a fairly lengthy passage, tries to disentangle the question of the degree to which our human constitution is religious, from that which influences human motivation:-

> "To alledge here that, by our reason and reflection, we may see what was the intention of God the Author of our Nature in this whole fabrick of our affections; that he plainly intended universal happiness, and that of each individual, as far as is consistent with it; and that this intention should be our rule: that we should therefore restrain and controll, not only all selfish affections, but even all such generous particular affections, within such bands as the universal interest requires: this is true in fact, but does not remove the difficulty, unless we are told first from what determination of soul, from what motive, we are to comply with the divine intentions? if from a desire of reward, then the selfish calm determination is the sole ultimate principle of all deliberate counsels in life: if from a perception of his moral excellence, a desire of imitating him, and from love, and gratitude, then the desire of moral excellence must be the supreme original determination. But this desire of moral excellence, however an original principle, must presuppose some antecedent determinations

> of the will as its object . And among these there must be some one in which the supreme moral excellence consists, otherways our very sense and desire of moral excellence, since it may recommend particular affections, which may interfere with one another, will again lead us into a new labyrinth of perplexity." (p. 51)

In Chapter IV Hutcheson makes clear that it is part of the function of the moral faculty to enquire "...seriously ... about the moral goodness, justice, holiness, rectitude of the Divine Nature itself, and likewise his will or laws" (p. 56) and, "These moral perfections then must be previously known, or else the definition by conforming to them is useless." He goes on to argue:- " 'Tis vain to alledge instruction, education, custom, or association of ideas as the original of moral approbation." (p. 57) Reason is limited and can only "...direct to the means; or compare two ends previously constituted by some other immediate powers." (p.58) "... desire of this moral excellence ." "...are the essence of a true piety toward God." (p. 70) "Our moral faculty must be strangely asleep where the desire of knowing the Supreme Excellence is a-wanting..." (p. 74)

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In A Short Introduction to Moral Philosophy Glasgow (Second Edition 1747) Hutcheson refers to Cicero's estimate of the place of ethics. Preface VI - "Whereas Cicero expressly declares, that the doctrine concerning virtue, and the supreme good, which is to be found elsewhere..." In Book I The Elements of Ethics, Chapter I Of Human Nature and its Parts, Hutcheson states "All such as believe that this universe, and human nature in particular, was formed by the wisdom and counsel of a deity, must expect to find in our structure and frame some clear evidences,..." (p. 2) "...we must therefore search accurately into the constitution of our nature, to see what sort of creature we are; for what purposes nature has formed us; what character God our Creator requires us to maintain." III "First then, Human nature consists of soul and body, each of which has its proper powers, parts or

faculties." (p. 3) "The enquiry into the body is more easy, and belongs to the Physicians." III "The parts or powers of the soul, which present us with a more glorious view, are of various kinds: but they are all reducible to two classes, the Understanding and the Will." (p.4) Hutcheson affirms the goodness of the Creator:- "If God therefore was originally wise and good, he must necessarily have preferred the present contitution of our sense approving all kindness and beneficence, to any contrary one; and the nature of virtue is thus as immutable as the divine Wisdom and Goodness." (p. 21) This was a view which caused Hume great problems, but he did not reject it completely. " Since then God must appear to us as the Supreme excellence, and the inexhaustible fountain of all good, to whom mankind are indebted for innumerable benefits most gratuitously bestowed; no affection of the soul can be more approved than the most ardent love and veneration toward the Deity, with a steady purpose to obey him..." (p. 22) A "...Divine Sense or Conscience naturally approving these more extensive affections should be the governing power in man..." (p. 24)

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As was noted in the thesis (p. 69) Hutcheson was prosecuted by Glasgow Presbytery for teaching heresy on two counts, viz., 1. that the standard of moral goodness was the promotion of the happiness of others: and, 2. that we could have a knowledge of good and evil without any prior knowledge of God. As was noted in our study of his works, some of his writings were capable of bearing that interpretation, but, on the whole, his theology requires the revealed religion of Theism, or at the very least the religion of Nature towards which Shaftesbury was sometimes tending. (Deism)

"In a Letter from a Gentleman, of 1745, Hume lists the charges made against the Treatise by those who sought to prevent his appointment to the University of Edinburgh:-

> 1. Universal Scepticism. See his Assertions... where he doubts everything (his own Existence excepted) and maintains the folly of pretending to believe any Thing with Certainty.

2. Principles leading to downright Atheism, by denying the Doctrine of Causes and Effects ... where he maintains, that the Necessity of a Cause to every Beginning of Existence, is not founded on any Arguments demonstrative or intuitive.

3. Errors concerning the very Being and Existence of a God. For Instance ... as to that Proposition, God is, he says (or, indeed as to any other Thing which regards Existence) 'The Idea of Existence is no distinct Idea which we unite with that of the Object, and which is capable of forming a compound Idea by Union.

4. Errors concerning God's being the first Cause, and prime Mover of the Universe: For as to this Principle, That the Deity first created Matter, and gave it its original Impulse, and likewise supports its Existence, he says, 'This Opinion is certainly very curious, but it will appear superflous to examine it in its Place Sc'.

5. He is charged with denying the Immateriality of the Soul, and Consequences flowing from this Denial...

6. With sapping the Foundations of Morality, by denying the natural and essential Difference between Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, Justice and Injustice; making the Difference only artificial, and to arise from human Conventions and Compacts." (Hume's Sentiments by Peter Jones, op. cit. p. 76).

In the Bobb-Merrill Co., 1970 edition of the Dialogues Nelson Pike in an Introduction wrote:- "... in the same year 1745 he applied for the chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh. His application was opposed by the principal of the university who accused him of atheism, heresy, and scepticism. In a letter uncovered by E.C. Mossner in the Edinburgh archives, Hume attempted to defend himself against these charges." (p. X)

It is doubtful if his application would have been refused by any leading university at the present time for the reasons given in the letter cited by Peter Jones. Some of the reasons are so completely out-of-date that not even Newton would have made an acceptable candidate. There is no doubt that Hume was at times careless in his manner of expression, undiplomatic in his statements about the Church and Churchmen, and perhaps given to airing his doubts a little too freely. But it has already been argued with good reason that he was never a convinced Atheist, or Sceptic.

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page

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page

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page

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Hume's Philosophy of Religion.

The view that Hume had no philosophy of religion worth discussing comes across in quite a number of textbooks which take for granted the view that he was a secular Intuitionist. Because of his secular outlook, it is argued that he had no real interest in the philosophy of religion. One such work is Hume, by Huxley, in which he writes:-

> "Hume's theism, such as it is, dissolves away in the dialectic river, until nothing is left but the verbal sack in which it was contained."[1]

And yet, as we do just what Professor Huxley suggested and turn from the Natural History of Religion, to the Treatise, the Inquiry, and the Dialogues, the story of what happened to the ass laden with salt, who took to the water, does not 'irresistably suggest itself'. An open-minded survey of his works will reveal that the view which insists that Hume was consistently a hard-bitten atheist is most certainly the sack which does not hold water. He was not a consistent Christian, far from it, but neither was he as great an atheist as some have made him out to be. That is more or less how he put it himself. In fact, if we remember that much of his thinking on religious questions was as a philosopher, his 'philosophy of religion' had historical depth as well as systematic precision and order. That is more than can be said for other treatments of the philosophy of religion from other more avowedly Christian pens. His philosophy of religion was not taken from the Judaeo-Christian tradition alone, but grew out of several religions found in the ancient civilizations. In this connection, his mastery of ancient Greek and Latin texts which is bourne witness to by the numerous footnotes which are found in many of his writings, is of the greatest significance. It is obvious that he began to read these texts soon after he had acquired a working grasp of Greek and Latin, while at university.

page

1. Hume. by A. Huxley. London, MacMillan & Co., in 1909 146

Hume's Natural History of Religion[2] is highly significant because it is the one volume which gives an outline of his 'philosophy of religion'. For those who tell us that he had no philosophy of religion worth mentioning, this small volume may be something of an embarrassment. Its existence certainly makes it impossible to claim that he had no interest in the subject, and when its contents are examined carefully, it is suprising to hear him speak with such a religious tone of voice. The tone is very different to that found in some of his provocatively sceptical works. His Natural History of Religion is noteworthy for another reason: it was written at a time when he must have been sketching the first outline of the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. As we will be examining the arguments advanced in the Dialogues at a later stage it will not be necessary to assess them at this point, but it must be of significance that both of these works were conceived at this time, because the arguments which were being used in the philosophy of religion debate must have been going through his mind together. It is probable that they have much light to cast on each other.

As we read through the Natural History of Religion it appears that Hume is on a serious religious enquiry.

> "As every enquiry which regards Religion is of the utmost importance..."[3]

> "The whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion."[4]

The phrase 'the whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author' is very reminiscent of Shaftesbury's writings, and the reference to 'the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion' support the view that Hume was not a Deist, and whatever religion he still possessed leant in favour of Theism. In fact there are passages in the Natural

2. The Natural History of Religion. by D. Hume. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press, in 1976.

3. The Natural History of Religion. op. cit. 25

4. " " " 25

History of Religion which do not look very different from the writings of the more orthodox theologians.

> "It appears to me, that if we consider the improvement of human society, from rude beginnings to a state of greater perfection, polytheism or idolatry was, and necessarily must have been, the first and most ancient religion of mankind."
>
> " 'Tis a matter of fact uncontestable, that about 1700 years ago all mankind were idolaters. The doubtful and sceptical principles of a few philosophers, or the Theism, and that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, form no objection worth regarding. Behold then the clear testimony of history. The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into idolatry." 5
>
> "It seems certain, that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some grovelling and familiar notion of superior powers, before they stretch their conception to that perfect being, who bestowed order on the whole frame of Nature." 6

Knowing the importance leading Christian scientists such as Newton attached to the Argument from Design, Hume had to concede its weight, even although it did not lead him to a religious conclusion.

> "But tho' I allow, that the order and frame of the universe, when accurately examined, affords such an argument; yet I can never think that this consideration could have an influence on mankind when they formed their first, rude notions of religion."

Then we come to one of the most Christian passages to have come from his pen:-

> "Adam, rising at once, in paradise, and in full perfection of his

5. The Natural History of Religion. Hume op. cit. 26
6. " 27

> faculties, would naturally, as represented by Milton, be astonished at the glorious appearance of nature, the heavens, the air, the earth, his own organs and members; and would be led to ask, whence this wonderful scene arose." 7

These passages make it abundantly clear that Hume was capable of writing on the natural history of religion in a similar vein to that found in the writings of the Butlers and the Berkeleys.* His Natural History of Religion can hardly be said to have beenwritten from a secular angle. This work was one in which he was beginning to explore the spiritual side of human nature. In view of what has been said already about the true nature of his Intuitionism, this development was of the greatest importance.

> "Any of the human affections may lead us into the notion of invisible, intelligent power; hope as well as fear, gratitude as affliction; But if we examine our own hearts, or observe what passes around us, we shall find, that men are much oftner thrown on their knees by melancholy than by agreeable passions." 8

As well as recognizing the force of the Argument from Design, and, in the above passage a form of the Moral Argument; he was driven to admit that the Cosmological Argument has a universal appeal.

> "The only point of theology, in which we shall find a consent of mankind almost universal is, that there is invisible, intelligent power in the world..." 9

Along with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, he would have been against most forms of primitive superstition, which led him in the following passage to make a distinction between true and false religionists.

> "These pretended religionists are really a kind of superstitious

7. The Natural History of Religion. Hume op. cit. 28
8. " 36
9. " 37

* In Of the Immortality of the Soul, Hume writes, 'By the mere light of reason it seems difficult to prove the Immortality of the Soul...It is the gospel and the gospel alone, that has brought life and immortality to light'. (Green's and Grose's edition of the Essays. vol. ii, p.399).

atheists, and acknowledge no being, that corresponds to our idea of a deity."[10]

He then evaluates Theism dispassionately. There is much about the structure of this evaluation which leads us to think that he felt it to be superior among all the other religious systems.

"Many theists, even the most zealous and refined have denied a particular providence, and have asserted, that the Sovreign mind or principle of all things, having fixed general laws, by which nature is governed, gives free and uninterrupted course to these laws, and disturbs not, at every turn, the settled order of events, by particular volitions. From the beautiful connection, say they, and rigid observance of established rules, we draw the chief argument for theism; and from the same principles are enabled to answer the principal objections against it."

"But being taught, by more reflection, that this very regularity and uniformity is the strongest proof of design and of a supreme intelligence, they return to that belief, which they had deserted; and they are now able to establish it on a firmer and more durable foundation."[11]

"Thus they proceed; till at last they arrive at infinity itself, beyond which there is no farther progress..." "...on which alone any rational worship or adoration can be founded."

"Polytheism or idolatrous worship, being founded entirely in vulgar traditions..."

"Theism is opposite both in its advantages and disadvantages. As that system supposes one, sole deity, the perfection of reason and goodness, it should, if justly prosecuted, banish everything frivolous, unreasonable, or inhuman from religious worship, and set

10. The Natural History of Religion. Hume op. cit. 38
11. " 50/51

before men the most illustrious example, as well as the most commanding motives of justice and benevolence." 12

"I ask the Theist, if he does not allow that there is a great and immeasurable, because incomprehensible, Difference between the human and divine mind..."13

That then is the side of Hume's 'philosophy of religion' which comes over to us in his Natural History of Religion. The foregoing selection of quotations illustrates very well the claim that his 'philosophy of religion' was, as presented in this study, not so very different to what was being propounded by the Butlers and the Hutchesons. But what about the 'philosophy of religion' which is presented in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion? Does the picture presented here contradict the above claim? Establishing precisely where Hume stood in the debate which is developed in the Dialogues is usually done by weighing the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments brought forward by the different speakers. It is frequently taken for granted that Hume sided with the 'winner' PHILO, with the inevitable implication that he was really unsympathetic to both Deism and Theism. Those who argue for this position can point out that, whereas the Natural History of Religion and other writings which appear sympathetic to Theism were published ostensibly to appease the Christian critics of Hume's scepticism; publication of the Dialogues was held back until his death, when it could be published unabridged. Hume had in the past been persuaded to tone down sceptical passages in his writings which his friends and publishers knew would outrage Christian opinion. He had gone along with this exercise most reluctantly and must have hoped for an opportunity one day to speak his mind on controversial arguments. Was this proof of his insincerity about his fundamental attitude to Theism, because his scepticism had become incurable?

His exposure to the scepticism of the Philosophes came long before he

12. The Natural History of Religion. Hume op. cit. 59
13. " 249

had an opportunity to study e.g., the Theism of Bishop Butler or encountered the more tolerant outlook of the Moderates in the Church of Scotland. The period when he had most difficulty over the publication of sceptical works came soon after his contact with the Continent. This was that early period in his career when he had not thought through the theological implications of the 'new naturalistic world'. His attitude was to mellow considerably with the years. As Greig has argued,[14] the Moderate Ministers within the Church of Scotland did much to reason his aversion to Christian belief out of him, so that, along with a much greater respect for the Christian apologetics of Bishop Butler, the later Hume is prepared to write a conservative Natural History of Religion. It would have been almost impossible for him to have written a work of this nature when he was writing his most controversial sceptical works.

But, are the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion so fundamentally different to the works from the earlier controversial period? If so, why did Hume find it necessary to make provision for the eventual unabridged publication of this work? Was he afraid that publication during his lifetime might be difficult? Was he reluctant to damage the image which several of his Christian contemporaries had formed of him through reading his Natural History of Religion? It is possible that there is some truth in all these suggestions. For that reason it is essential now to turn to the Dialogues themselves to see if they provide us with a satisfactory answer.

The first observation which must be made about this work is that it was not a completely new work, in the sense that Hume's Enquiry Concerning Human Nature was different and fresh. The Enquiry was breaking new ground completely, because in it he was endeavouring to bring to bear upon the new, scientific understanding of the workings of the human physiology a different philosophy. Today we would want to describe it as a 'philosophy of psychology'. The Dialogues should be seen as

14. David Hume. by J.Y.T. Greig. London, Jonathan Cape, 1934. 377

belonging to a different category: to the 'philosophy of religion' debate rather than to the 'philosophy of psychology'debate . Hume's handling of both could be equally controversial, but they were two quite separate debates, the one new and strange; the other old and familiar. It would not be unfair to describe the debate which is developed in the Dialogues as an old classical debate dressed up in a modern form.

2.There can be no questioning the fact that Hume was aware of the full force of PHILO's arguments against both Deism and Theism. And yet, as we follow the main thrust of this anti-religious diatribe, it is clear that the central argument is developed against Deism and on Deism's terms. So that the second observation which we must make about the Dialogues is that the debate appears to be conducted against Deism first and foremost. We have already examined the case that, in the Natural History of Religion, Hume was much more sympathetic to Theism than to Deism.

The attraction of Deism lay in its rational appeal to the need for a clock-work motor Creator, who had wound up the workings of the universe, and, at some point in the far distant past, set the machinery in motion. The attractiveness of the clock-work motor mechanism lay in the detachment of the clock's owner from its normal workings. In the case of a clock which has to be wound only once a week, having been fully wound, the clock can then be left to carry out its work by itself as the main spring unwinds. This was seen as an illustration of the way in which a detached Creator had made the universe and then left it to run itself. The argument from Design was having great force at a time when the order which exists among the planets within our solar system was being discovered through the telescope. The analogy from the clock-work motor, which was also being developed to work with ever-increasing degrees of precision, was too obvious to ignore. To those who found the abstruse Theistic concepts of an infinite deity too remote to come to terms with, the Deistic use of the argument from Design seemed tailor-made. From it they were satisfied that they knew

how the world was made, and were reassured that this remote Creator-deity was making certain that his perfect creation remained just that. The Deistic view of life was optimistic and light-hearted. The Deists liked the idea of Creator who kept a light touch.

It was to that theological outlook that Hume was addressing himself first and foremost when he set to write the Dialogues. The appeal of Deism in his day was immense, and that was a situation which Hume, with the trained eye of a philosopher, sought to address. That is the background against which the writing of the Dialogues should be placed. The full significance of this interpretation will only be seen at the conclusion of our study of the Dialogues.

Because much of the Theistic apologetic was less open to the neat, logical demonstration which the Deists had been able to use, PHILO found it difficult to attack Theism directly. Some of the Deists had proposed a 'finite' deity, whose existence could be proved by reference to the clock-work motor analogy. The five Theistic proofs which pointed to an 'infinite' deity, presented a much more formidable challenge to the sceptic. Time and time again we will find that the main thrust of PHILO's anti-religious attack is directed against the central Deistic arguments.

DEMEA could well have been intended to be a representative of Francis Hutcheson's school of Theistic Intuitionism.

> "It is my opinion, I own, replied DEMEA, that each man feels, in a manner, the truth of religion within his own breast; and from a consciousness of his imbecility and misery, rather than from any reasoning, is led to seek protection from that Being, on whom all nature is dependent."[15]

PHILO pretends to agree:-

> "I am indeed persuaded, said PHILO, that the best and indeed the

15. Dialogues by David Hume. (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 309

only method of bringing every one to a due sense of religion, is by just representations of the misery and wickedness of men."

PHILO goes on to enumerate more of the evils which are present in the world:-

"A perpetual war is kindled amongst all living creatures. Necessity, hunger, want stimulate the strong and courageous: Fear, anxiety, terror, agitate the weak and infirm..."

DEMEA counters this argument by claiming man to be "...in part, an exception to this rule. For by combination in society, he can easily master lions, tigers, and bears, whose greater strength and agility naturally enable them to prey on him." PHILO disagrees:-

"Man it is true, can, by combination, surmount all his real enemies, and become master of the whole animal creation: but does he not immediately raise up to himself imaginary enimies, the daemons of his fancy, who haunt him with superstitious terrors, and blast every enjoyment of life?"...."Man is the greatest enemy of man."[16]

CLEANTHES admits that much of what PHILO and DEMEA have been saying is true, but protests that:-

"...it is not so common as you represent it."[17]

First DEMEA objects to this optimistic view of life, then PHILO asks:-

"And is it possible, CLEANTHES, said PHILO, that after all these reflections, and infinitely more, which might be suggested, you can still persevere in your Anthropomorphism and assert the moral attributes of the Deity, his justice, benevolence, mercy and rectitude, to be of the same nature with these virtues in human creatures?"[18]

CLEANTHES the Deist finally tumbles to the fact that PHILO had been agreeing with DEMEA the Theist, in order to erect "...a concealed

16. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) 311
17. " " " 314
18. " " " 314

battery against me." As that is how Hume himself structured the debate, PHILO's and DEMEA's collusion against CLEANTHES must be significant. CLEANTHES reaffirms his belief in the goodness of the Creator, and because of that, of the Creation. PHILO brings forward a number of counter-arguments. The argument from Design was impressive PHILO was prepared to agree, but there was still the major Moral objection that evil should not be so powerful in a created universe, if the design had been as flawless as CLEANTHES was claiming it to be.

CLEANTHES replies that much of the difficulty on this question had arisen because of Theistic terminology, which made such extravagant claims about the perfection of the deity and his design for the world. As a Deist, he preferred "...more accurate and more moderate expressions. The terms admirable, excellent, superlatively great, wise and holy, these sufficeintly fill the imaginations of men; and any thing beyond, besides that it leads to absurdities, has no influence on your affections or sentiments." The Deistic theological frame-of-reference was in many ways different from that held by classical Theism.

> "Thus, in the present subject, if we abandon all human analogy, as seems your intention, DEMEA, I am afraid we abandon all religion, and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration. If we preserve human analogy, we must for ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind; a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil, and every untoward phenomenon be explained and adjusted. A less evil may then be chosen, in order to avoid a greater; Inconveniences be submitted to, in order to reach a desirable end: And in a word, benevolence, regulated by wisdom, and limited by necessity, may produce such a world as the present."[19]

19. Dialogues Hume (ed. MacIntyre) 321

That is a full and fair statement of the Deism held by many in Hume's day, and towards which Shaftesbury was moving. Hume, however, was never greatly impressed by the claims which were being made for Deism, fearing that it was too glib in its handling of the major theological antinomies. That is why it is so important to follow the theological system which is under attack in the Dialogues. To the defence of Deism which we have just been considering PHILO responds that CLEANTHES is now forced to reason about this deity "...merely from known phenomena, and to drop every arbitrary supposition or conjecture.

> "Did I show you a house or palace, where there was not one appartment convenient or agreeable; where the windows, doors, fires, passages, stairs, and the whole oeconomy of the building were the source of noise, confusion, fatigue, darkness, and the extrems of heat and cold; you would certainly blame the contrivance, without any farther examination. The architect would in vain display his subtlety and prove to you, that if this door or that window were altered, greater ills would ensue." "If you find many inconveniences and deformities in the building, you will always, without entering into any detail, condemn the architect."[20]

PHILO lists four flaws which condemn the universe as the work of CLEANTHES's deity:-

1. "...pains as well as pleasures, are employed to excite all creatures to action, and to make them vigilant in the great work of self-preservation."

2. "...the conducting of the world by general laws; and this seems nowise necessary to a very perfect being."

3. "...the great frugality with which all powers and faculties are distributed to every particular being."

20. Dialogues Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) 322

4. "...the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature." [21]

This more critical approach to the Teleological argument was written some time after the initial impact of Newton's claim from design had made its mark. Scholars were beginning to ask if it was really as simple and straightforward as Newton had been suggesting: was the analogy from a machine sound? Kant in particular was to subject this argument to very thorough scrutiny, so that by the time Hume had made the final revisions to the Dialogues, the major criticisms of the Teleological argument were well known. All the same it would be a mistake to conclude that PHILO was necessarily speaking for Hume. In the Natural History of Religion passage on this very argument he professes to accept the argument from Design.

"The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion." [22]

Professor A.J. Ayer commented on such passages from the Natural History of Religion in this way:-

"Hume nowhere proclaims himself an atheist. On the contrary, in the 'Natural History of Religion' and elsewhere in his writings, he professes to accept the Argument from Design." [23]

And even Professor Huxley, with no desire to portray Hume as a believer in any of the Theistic proofs, says of the Natural History of Religion, that it did "...little more than express the writer's contentment with the Argument from design." [24] If Professor Huxley was willing to concede that there was a period when Hume was prepared to give the impression that he accepted the Argument from Design, then we

21. Dialogues Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) 327

22. The Natural History of Religion. Hume op. cit. 25

23. Hume. by A.J. Ayer. Published by the Oxford University Press, 1980. 23

24. Huxley op. cit. 144

can be fairly certain that any other casual reader of the works in question would be drawn to a similar conclusion. Huxley quotes an interesting passage (IV p. 442) in which Hume discusses two forms of the Argument from Design.

> "Were men led into the apprehension of invisible, intelligent power, by a contemplation of the works of nature, they could never possibly entertain any conception but of one single being, who bestowed existence and order on this vast machine, and adjusted all its parts according to one regular plan or connected system." 25

That is a more or less straightforward statement of Newton's way of expressing the Argument from Design. Hume then goes on to compare that view with a Polytheistic account of this argument.

> "For though, to persons of a certain turn of mind, it may appear altogether absurd, that several independent beings, endowed with superior wisdom, might conspire in the contrivance and execution of one regular plan, yet this merely arbitrary supposition, which, even if allowed possible, must be confessed neither to be supported by probability nor necessity." 26

In manuals of natural religion that type of refutation of the polytheistic account of the teleological principle which is present in the creation, was being developed; and here again Hume would have been following the line taken by Newton. That section leads naturally to the conclusion:-

> "All things in the universe are evidently of a piece. Everything is adjusted to everything. One design prevails throughout the whole. And this uniformity leads the mind to acknowledge one author; because the conception of different authors, without any distinction of attributes or operations, serves only to give

25. Huxley op. cit. 144
26. " " " 144

perplexity to the imagination, without bestowing any satisfaction on the understanding."[27]

Just as Hume elsewhere rejects Deistic arguments in favour of Theism, so in the passage which Huxley quotes in full, it could be argued that Hume rejects Polytheistic arguments in favour of Theistic Teleology. Nevertheless Huxley still prefers to believe that PHILO, in the speech which concludes the Dialogues, is delivering Hume's final opinion.[28]

We can be certain that Hume would have been exposed to a number of versions and defences of the Teleological argument. These will be examined in greater depth when we come to consider Hume's position vis-a-vis all the Theistic arguments.

When DEMEA realises that PHILO intended to use these arguments to show that the physical universe was "...a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children! ", he cried "Hold! hold! I joined alliance with you in order to prove the incomprehensible nature of the Divine Being, and refute the principles of CLEANTHES, who would measure every thing by a human rule and standard. But now I find you running into all the topics of the greatest libertines and infidels; and betraying that holy cause, which you seemingly espoused. Are you secretly, then, a more dangerous enemy than CLEANTHES himself?"

To which CLEANTHES replies:-

"Are you so late in perceiving it? ... Believe me, DEMEA; your friend PHILO, from the beginning, has been amusing himself at both our expense; and it must be confessed, that the injudicious reasoning of our vulgar theology has given him but too just a handle of ridicule."[29]

PHILO brings the discussion to a close with an anti-clerical swipe:-

27. Huxley op. cit. 144
28. " " " 145
29. Dialogues Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 330

> "Blame not so much, interposed PHILO, the ignorance of these reverend gentlemen. They know how to change their style with the times."

For scholars like Huxley, the identification of PHILO with Hume should not be questioned; and, as PHILO 'wins' scepticism is seen to triumph over religion. Restricting the discussion to the Dialogues for the present, that interpretation raises at least two major difficulties. Firstly, there is the difficulty of reconciling the attitude about the world which is expressed in PHILO's gloomiest passages with Hume the cheerful optimist, encountered in an earlier study of his true anthropological model. It could be argued that his attitude to life changed in later years, and because of that PHILO can be said to speak for the later Hume. The difficulty with that argument, however, is that of logical consistency. To accept that Hume as a sick, elderly man overturned the finest of his work from his earlier years, is to suggest that he had no fixed position worth defending. Some have argued that that is indeed the case, but that is a minority view. Secondly, in the Dialogues DEMEA and PHILO are able to agree about quite a number of things, so that PHILO is seen to be closer to DEMEA than CLEANTHES. Again we are compelled to wonder about Hume's attitude to Deism and Theism. Not only did he find the Theistic arguments more difficult to refute, but his religious sympathies, such as they were, leaned much more in favour of Theism. If the Dialogues were structured to address the arguments used to defend the popular Deism of his day, can they be said to deal with Theism in a satisfactory manner? The structure of the Dialogues must be of significance.

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Let us now look more closely at the claim that Hume's rejection of Theism was much less decisive than the rejection of Deism which we find in the Dialogues. It seems probable that we can discover the

starting point of his spirited attack on Deism in the writings of Bishop Butler.

> "A new book of Butler's published within the year. This was the Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature. (1736), a dispassionate and well-reasoned work designed to convince the Deists by empirical arguments that their refutations of Christianity were equally valid against their own religion of Nature."[30]

Once that statement is studied and examination is made of Hume's most forceful statements in the Dialogues, very much the same pattern is evident. Most of the arguments are brought to bear against Deism and the religion of Nature. The form of Hume's attack on Deism; "...whatever is natural is good..." bears a strong resemblance to Butler's anti-Deistic attacks. But this attack on 'naturalism' seems more than a little strange if Mossner's interpretation of Hume's intention to create a "...new world, naturalistic rather than supernaturalistic, empirical rather than rationalistic based upon a clearer understanding of the manner in which the mind of man really functions..."[31] were to be proved correct. To have attacked every form of 'naturalism' would, in that case, have involved Hume in sawing the branch on which he was sitting, whereas it is obvious that his use of Butler's arguments greatly weakened the arguments from naturalism. He did not accept in any case the argument that 'what is natural is right'.

1. Finite and Infinite.

One of the main issues involved in the debate between the Theists and the Deists related to infinity. Leading Theistic British philosophers of Hume's era such as Hutcheson, Berkeley and Locke, employed infinity as a divine attribute.

> " 'Finite and infinite', says Locke, 'are looked upon by the

30. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. London, Oxford, 1980 111

31. Mossner op. cit. 129

> mind as modes of quality...He has no scruple about speaking of them as attributes of God, of whom, as being 'in his essence simple and unconfounded', he would never have spoken of as 'having parts'."[32]

> "Locke admits that the term 'infinite' is applied 'figuratively'. 'When we call them (e.g. His power, wisdom, and goodness) infinite, we have no other idea of infinity but what carries with it some reflection on, or imitation of, that number or extent of the acts or objects of God's wisdom etc., which can never be supposed so great or so many which these attributes will not always surmount, let us multiply them in our thoughts as far as we can with all the infinity of endless number."[33]

Hume's early exposure to Bayle's criticism of this use and application of the argument from infinity, probably explains why Hume too did not accept it in the unquestioning way in which some British Theists had.

> "The divisibility in infinitum is an opinion embraced by Aristotle, and almost all the professors of philosophy, in all universities for several ages. ...for whenever their distinctions are exhausted, without having rendered this doctrine comprehensible, they shelter themselves in the nature of the subject, and alledge, that our understanding being limited, none ought to be surprised that they cannot resolve what relates to infinity..."[34]

Put like that, we can see that the argument from infinity can be used to explain away everything, but Hume was wrong to follow Bayle so closely on this question because as we contemplate the vastness of outer space and the countless aeons of eternity, it becomes absolutely clear to us that we cannot collapse infinity into a simpler concept. There is a right way and a wrong way of handling the argument from infinity, and Hume was in order to draw attention to this problem, but the fact remains that those concepts which we classify as belonging to a unique category

32. Treatise on Human Nature. (Vol 2) by David Hume.(Ed.Green) 117

33. Treatise Hume (Ed. Green & Grose) 118

34. The Philosophy of David Hume. by N.K. Smith. London, MacMillan and Co., in 1941. 339

which some may refer to as the realm of the transcendent, are not at all easily understood, for reasons quite other than the powers of our senses to provide us with reliable information about the world in which we live. Our senses are able to provide us with enough reliable information about our world for most ordinary purposes. But we are aware that there is another level which is quite beyond us. Information which we are sure of at the finite level is no longer reliable at this other level, because it is a sphere which transcends our normal ways of thinking.

Bayle's approach had been to say that there is nothing which is beyond human understanding, because everything can in the end be brought down to the finite level. Even those mysteries which we place in this special category which we call the infinite, could all be explained if we were able to understand them in their finite parts. This argument assumes that there is a simple explanation for everything. Our problem, therefore, is lack of knowledge. In time all the mysteries of infinity will be made clear. To give a modern example, a colour television picture may strike us as quite incomprehensible is we possessed no knowledge of television technology. If we came from a primitive society the wonder would be even greater. We would tend naturally to the mysterious and supernatural for an explanation. But, were an inquisitive primitive to come right up to the screen, he would see not a nice, clear colour picture, but a collection of blue, red and green dots moving around. Very quickly the element of incomprehensibility would begin to disappear. Up to a point Bayle's approach would have been valid: understanding how a colour television works does take away a lot of the wonder out of seeing colour pictures for the first time, but even here, it is true that in some measure a 'change of property' has taken place. There comes a point when the coloured dots which bombard the television screen cease to be just dots moving around at random and become a medium for human creativity. A similar 'change of property' can be illustrated in other ways. When a jet engine is not turning we can see clearly each of the vanes which form part of the turbine. But once the engine has started, the vanes rotate so rapidly that they disappear, and all that can be seen is a blurr. When some chemicals are mixed together in a beaker they change their character completely, to form a new substance with different properties. When an artist mixes together two different primary colours, they are lost in the creation of a new colour. It is to this 'change of property' which happens as we move from the finite to the infinite that the physics of relativity is now rightly applying itself.

The advance of science has done much to undermine the relevance of Aristotle 'divisibility in infinitum' argument as well as the attacks which were made on it by scholars like Bayle. Not even Newton, with his immense grasp of the principles which govern natural forces, appreciated how much, the farther we progress from the 'finite' to the 'infinite', the simplest of finite certainties are subject to change. There is a philosophical necessity for distinguishing beteen something finite - a constant finite certainty such as - 'an inch is a twelfth division of one foot', and something unknowable because it is infinite - such as 'what lies beyond that which can be seen by our most powerful space telescope or probe'? There is in that comparison a difference in scale which is so great, that, merely to be able to communicate it in ordinary language we have to use terms such as 'the finite' and 'the infinite'. In the Scotsman of 23rd. April 1991 it was reported that "... a mysterious body far brighter than everything else in the universe has been discovered by astronomers at the Royal Greenwich Observatory. The object is a quasar and makes our Sun appear very pale, because it emits 1,000,000,000,000,000 times as much light. It is so far away that observers on Earth are seeing it as it was 12 billion years ago." These are proportions which force us to see the magnitude of distances which are known to exist in the universe, and which testify to that which in philosophy is called the infinite.

Much research has still to be done, however, in Space, Time and the Incarnation Professor T.F. Torrance has shown how much our understanding of the universe has changed. "Newton himself spoke of space and time as an infinite receptacle in terms of the infinity and eternity of God, for it is in God as in a container that we live and move and have our being. Thus infinite volume is related in his thought to the Spirit of God and infinite time is identified with eternity - infinite space and time are in fact attributes of Deity."[35] Professor Torrance claims that Newton returned to the Aristotelian and Medieval notion of a system of reference from a point of absolute rest. Nicholas Capaldi has shown that Newton also parted company with traditional Aristotelianism in this field, but this was in relation to the Aristotelian account of 'causation'.[36] As will be seen at a later stage, Newton held that it is not motion but change in motion that has to be explained. Newton's first law states that: 'Every body continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a right line unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it'. In Newton we find the idea of uniform motion in a straight line as well as the Aristotelian concept of a state at rest. However, as we come nearer to the 20th. century even Newton's revised explanation of the principle of causation cannot

35. Space, Time and the Incarnation. by T.F. Torrance. Published by the Oxford Press in 1969.

preserve the receptacle theory of the universe and the finite constants which often went with it.

> "The other principal conception of space and time is the relational idea which was given its supreme expression in the space-time relativity theory when Einstein, following out a line of thought from four-dimensional geometry, found he had to reject the notion of absolute space and time both as taught by Kant, for whom they were a priori forms of intuition outside the range of experience, as taught by Newton, for whom they formed an inertial system independent of material events contained in them but acting on them and conditioning our knowledge of the universe. This has had the effect of shattering the receptacle idea and of undermining the radical dualism to which it had given rise in modern philosophy and theology as well as science."[37]

This whole trend in scientific thought has militated against the Deism which Hume was criticizing in the Dialogues, and, if anything, the view of the universe which we have today confirms what Professor Torrance affirmed when he wrote: "...we are not enveloped by finite constants but are exposed to limitless and incomprehensible immensities."[38] Professor Torrance traces the divisions between different philosophers on the relationship between the finite and the infinite down through the centuries. The Pythagoreans and Atomists speculated that there was an 'actual infinite' while to Stoic thought it seemed 'unthinkable and unintelligible'. However, with Duns Scotus there came a 'dynamic and relational concept of space'.

> "Thus Duns Scotus approached the question of space not from a point of immobility in the universe or immutability in God but from a centre in God's active relation to the world."[39]

Through the Middle Ages theologians had retained the 'receptacle or container concept of space'. Newton was to propose an 'infinite

37. Torrance op. cit. 58
38. " " " 22
39. " " " 45

receptacle' in terms of the 'infinity and eternity of God'. But his retention of the receptacle concept, according to Professor Torrance, in the end paved the way for rationalistic Deism.

> "Then questions began to be asked as to the fields of connection in which things are found, which yielded the view that they are not related like discrete bodies (although this is the way in which we observe them) but are connected up in a continuous flow...through the universe. This gave rise to the relational and dynamic concept of space in which the old receptacle idea was finally shattered. That carries us into the space-time relativity theory, but well before then in the nineteenth century absolute space had become highly questionable and static structures of thought began to be dismantled."[40]

In the Dialogues was Hume employing the Deistic objection to any appeal beyond the court of Human reason? What are we to make of the following assertion: "...' 'tis absurd to talk of any perception beyond what these faculties can judge of'..."?[41] That sounds very much like the type of claim which the Deists of Hume's day would have made. From such a statement it is clear to see that he preferred to restrict the discussion in the philosophy of religion debate to perceptions which our faculties can understand and work with. Yet Green objected that although Hume accepts the idea of 'number' in the second part of the Treatise, and argues from it against infinite divisibility, he casts no light on the type of impression from which it is derived. Not only does he not describe the impression, or impressions but he creates the suspicion that his case against infinite divisibility is related to the apparent implication of an infinite capacity of the mind. Is it from the mind's limited capacity that he attacks the whole concept of infinity?

> "...' 'tis universally allow'd that the capacity of the mind is limited, and can never attain to a full and adequate conception of infinity'..."[42]

40. Torrance op. cit. 45
41. Treatise Hume (Ed. Green & Grose) Vol. 1 op. cit. 356
42. " " " " 334

It is important to note that Hume's attack on the theological arguments taken from infinity was the product of his special brand of scepticism, a scepticism which was based on his pessimistic conclusions about what the human mind could grasp. This was a key issue in the disputes between the Deists and the Theists. The Deists insisted on concepts which were within human comprehension; whereas the Theists objected that there may be valid knowledge which is not accessible (or not accessible yet) to the human mind. Hume adds a further interesting mathematical puzzle about infinity:-

> "...' 'tis also obvious that whatever is capable of being divided in infinitum, must consist of an infinite number of parts, and that 'tis impossible to set any bounds on the number of parts, without setting bounds at the same time to division'."[43]

At last, near the end of the first volume of the Treatise, he appears to relent momentarily and concede that the mind cannot be satisfied with finite certainties:-

> " 'My memory of past errors and perplexities, makes me diffident for the future...boundless ocean, which runs into immensity'."[44]

2. Theism and Deism.

Deism was becoming fashionable in Hume's day. Poets, writers, artists, philosophers and even some divines were becoming enthralled with it. Soon their mood would be summed up in the lines:-

> God's in his heaven -
> All's right with the world![45]

Kant was an example of a philosopher who had become a Deist, and tried to win over to it one of his students who had been converted to evangelical Christianity. Some of Hume's anti-religious generalizations may have been aimed at every anti-religious sentiment, but Deism most certain-

43. Treatise Hume (Ed. Green & Grose) Vol. 1 op. cit. 335
44. " " " 544
45. Pippa. Understanding Poetry by R.P. Warren, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960.

ly did not impress him, and his dissatisfaction with the arguments which were used to support it may have been his primary reason for writing the Dialogues. Just as there is in every generation of Christians attitudes which will not stand up to close examination, because one generation may be strong on one truth but weak on another; so too in Hume's day many Christians were being swept along by the shallow optimism which Deism had generated. They had not thought deeply at all about this new creed for which they were giving up many traditional beliefs. With all this woolly thinking around many Christians felt confused.

This was a situation which Hume was not slow to exploit! As a philosopher, he was ideally equipped to expose the inconsistencies in Deist thought, which he did with style and invective. But we have already observed from our study of the conclusion of the Dialogues, that PHILO's attacks on Deism were in places similar to DEMEA's. For that very reason we can see why it is possible to claim that Calvinists could have sided with Hume in some of his criticisms of Deism. It is not being suggested that Hume offered these criticisms from a clearly defined Christian perspective, but what can be claimed is that whatever religion he possessed leaned in favour of Theism.

In an attempt to keep logical tabs on what was being said about the deity at every point, Deism had proposed a finite deity. Theism insisted that the true God is an infinite Being, whose attributes cannot be fully understood by fallen, finite mortals. However, as discussion of such an infinite Being presented a permanent obstacle to rational argument, how much more convenient if philosophy of religion were to restrict itself to a 'finite' deity! That approach did not satisfy Hume. In the Natural History of Religion he sets out to demonstrate the superiority of Theism. The following is one of many passages which illustrates that claim:-

"Theism is opposite both in its advantages and disadvantages. As

> that system supposes one sole deity, the perfection of reason and goodness, it should, if justly prosecuted, banish every thing frivolous, unreasonable, or inhuman from religious worship, and set before men the most illustrious example, as well as the most commanding motives of justice and benevolence."[46]

The price of insisting that a full apprehension of the deity be retained at every point in the philosophy of religion debate, is the closing off of all that transcends fallen, finite human understanding. Not until Logical Positivism attempted to establish that the only meaningful propositions are those which are clearly verifiable, was it appreciated how much of life that approach was closing out. Especially on the frontiers of our most empirical sciences, we are being surprised all the time. There our research scientists are encountering paradox and impenetrable obscurity.

The Scriptural doctrine of God is of a Being whose glory, 'the heavens of heavens cannot contain'[47] ; who is 'without beginning and without end of days'[48] ; and whose hand 'no one can stay, nor say what doest thou'?[49] To an age on the eve of the industrial revolution there was something attractive about the idea of a finite God, who had 'wound up the universe as one would a clock-work motor', and then 'let it go to unwind itself by a host of natural processes'. It attempted to deal with causation and providence whilst leaving plenty of room for human freedom. What was 'natural' was considered in tune with the machinery which God had instituted in the Creation. There was little place for the Doctrine of Original Sin and very little consideration given to the 'problem of evil'.

That was why Hume was soon able to reduce the Deist's deity to a miserable caricature of the kind of deity which any self-respecting scholar of the period would have found it possible to believe in. A sort of potty professor whose inventions could never be made to work properly. The clock-work motor had been wound up and put into motion, but no provision had been made against 'mechanical breakdown' or any other unforseen contingency. No

46. The Natural History of Religion. by David Hume. Published by Oxford at the Clarendon Press in 1976. 59

47. I Kings 8:27.

48. The Epistle to the Hebrews 7:3.

49. Daniel 4:35.

preparation had been made to deal with the disruptive forces of the Kingdom of Darkness, so that God had taken a gamble which somehow had not come off.

Through having diminished the importance of the problem of evil, the Deists may have felt free to play down the distinctions between right and wrong. Hume follows relentlessly the weaknesses of Deism in the Dialogues. DEMEA, the Deist tells CLEANTHES the Theist and PHILO the sceptic:- "for one vexation,...a hundred enjoyments."[50] PHILO finds this attitude unrealistic. He insists that all religions must face up to the terrible reality of evil in the world, rather than ignore it in order to be able to dismiss it. To imagine that it is in order to do what's natural because 'what's natural is good', as some Deist's had suggested, was to have a far too optimistic view of human nature. Is there a hint of the depth of Calvinistic influence in Hume's thinking in the sharp rejoinder: "...nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems which assert that virtue is natural and vice unnatural." ?[51] Seen in that light the Dialogues are a devastating attack on Deism in in Christian doctrine, as well as in the cultural and academic tradition which developed out of it. Admittedly, in places Hume's view of human nature is similar to the Deistic optimistic view. Reference has been made already to the 'cheerful disposition' ideal state which can be found in his anthropological model. Our study of the Dialogues has shown as well that he was willing to grant a hearing to less optimistic views of human nature. The traditional Christian teaching on Original Sin would certainly have insisted that not all the actions which proceed from man in some hypothetical 'natural' state, are to be equated with virtue. It is central to PHILO's aim in the Dialogues to prove that human nature is not perfect and that the world is not perfect, although in his case the argument is developed from the perspective of a sceptic who wants to demonstrate that the creation could not have been the work of an all-good, all-powerful deity.

50. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. by David Hume. Part X (Ed. MacIntyre) 317

51. Treatise, by David Hume Book III Sec. II (Ed. MacIntyre) 201

Some have argued that Hume attacked Calvinistic Theism by the implications which can be drawn from his anti-religious arguments, even although he did not refute it specifically. That would appear to be Mossner's position. "...Hume was confident, would put an end to all such controversies as that between the Deists and the Christians by proving that both sides were wrong..."[52] This assertion is unsatisfactory because if Hume had been attacking the Scriptural Doctrine of God, then he would surely have addressed himself more directly to the philosophical arguments relating to Theism. Simply to erect a man of straw in order to demolish it, can only impress the perverse. The brunt of the case in the Dialogues is made against Deism rather than Scriptural Theism.

Had Hume's attack on Theism been consistent he would have ended up adopting a position closer to that held by the atheistic Philosophes. And when this position is maintained consistently even naturalistic ethics must be threatened. After G.E. Moore, who was among the first to see that naturalistic ethics must be threatened when the Naturalistic Fallacy is committed, moral philosophy has been searching desperately for an accepted seat of moral authority. It is not as though there was anything lacking in Hume's understanding of this very point. All moral distinctions must be whimsical and arbitrary if there is no accepted moral foundation.

3. The 'Theistic Proofs'.

If it is accepted that the analysis in the preceding section is correct, and that while Hume's attack on Deism was serious, his attack on Theism per se was far from fatal; then it is essential to look at the 'Theistic Proofs' in order to see how they relate to his clearly stated views.

a. The Cosmological Argument, or the argument that an 'uncaused first cause' - divine, omnipotent power - brought the Creation into being. The Theist not only postulates the 'spirituality of the first cause', but extends the divine involvement in the Creation through myriads of cause-and-effect processes, down through the ages to the present time. Hume

52. Mossner op. cit. 113

would have known that Locke held to the 'spirituality of the first cause', and that Berkeley held that there must be 'efficient power somewhere'.[53] Hume was fully conversant with the Theistic view:- "The whole frame of nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion."[54] [55]

Nicholas Capaldi has given considerable attention to the question of Sir Isaac Newton's influence on David Hume. That is made clear by the title of a book which deals with this question - David Hume: The Newtonian Philosopher. Some scholars have argued that he used Newtonianism as his model in moral philosophy. Newton had made so much clear. It was inevitable that his insights would have an application in many branches of learning. Hume must have felt tempted to imagine that a more scientific understanding of man would make possible a 'science' of moral philosophy. At this time the definition of what constitutes a science was much broader than it is today. During the Middle Ages for example, theology was sometimes referred to as the Queen of the sciences. The belief that everything could be fitted into a scientific view of the world has been present in moral philosophy from the 18th. century right down to the present day. But was Hume a Newtonian methodologist? In the following passage Capaldi traces the historical background to Newton's work:-

> "...there has been a tradition of mathematical science in Western thought going all the way back to the Pythagoreans. In any case, such philosophers as Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz among others were impressed with the fact that mathematics seemed to be the key to physical science, that mathematics had a demonstrative character, that is, one can prove all things by demonstrating how conclusions follow from first principles or axioms. This, of course, is very Platonic; and it also allowed these philosophers free play with respect to the basic principles or axioms.

53. Treatise, by David Hume. Vol I (Ed. Green & Grose) 294
54. " " " " 294
55. The Natural History of Religion. by David Hume. op. cit. 25

Yet an important scientific development forever altered the early optimism about this model. The Copernican theory of planetary motion considerably complicated the simple faith in mathematics. Briefly, we must recall that Copernicus challenged the prevailing Ptolemaic theory in which it was assumed that the earth was both stationary and the centre around which the other heavenly bodies revolved. Copernicus postulated a sun-centred universe wherein the earth revolved around the sun. Copernicus published his views in 1543, but it was not until the 18th. and 19th. centuries that his view was completely accepted."[56]

"For several hundred years both the Copernican and Ptolomaic theories accounted for all the facts, and both of them were presented in a sophisticated mathematical format. Frequently, the controversy turned on purely metaphysical issues. The crucial importance of the fact that two mathematically and factually compatible theories could exist at the same time is that it underscored the necessity for a more sophisticated conception of the scientific model.

The man most responsible for this new and sophisticated model was Isaac Newton. Like his predecessors and contemporaries, Newton was both a mathematical and theoretical genius at inventing conceptual schemes."[57]

Newton's understanding of 'causation' was to have a profound impact on the study of physics, which until this time had depended on the Aristotelian view of the world.

"In Aristotelian language, the end or final cause of an object is to realize its essence or formal cause. It also means that this formal cause or essence is embodied in another individual which possesses an identical form or essence and serves as the efficient cause of its production. It is this coincidence of formal and efficient causes which permits us to infer unerringly what a cause must necessarily

56. Capaldi op. cit. 36
57. " " " 37

be from mere acquaintance with the effect. The formal cause becomes in practice the explanatory principle, since what a thing is essentially is built into it.

Locomotion, or change of place, which for Aristotle is presupposed by all kinds of change, cannot be explained by impact alone. The motion of primary bodies depends upon the fact that each has a natural place in which it finally comes to rest. Since rest is natural, every movement requires the existence of a mover. Moreover, if the world has a rationale, there cannot be an infinite series, or chain, of causes and movers. Hence, there must be a self-sufficient, self-explanatory, unmoved (un-caused in the efficient sense) mover. In short, there must be a first mover. Finally, since motion is eternal, the first mover or movers must be eternal."[58]

"While Aristotle in some places asserts the existence of more than one first mover, the medieval philosophers who adopted his physics opted for a single first mover. It did not require much imagination to conceive of a God as the first cause or creator."[59]

"This brings us to the crucial question of what revolution was introduced by Newton's physics. Newton's first law states that: 'Every body continues in its state of rest or of uniform motion in a right line unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it'. The revolutionary idea is that uniform motion in a straight line is as natural as a state at rest. It is not motion but a change in motion that has to be explained. In short, change of motion can be explained in the Newtonian system by impact alone (or by gravity in the case of falling objects)."[60]

On the basis of the Newtonian framework, five philosophical consequences would follow:-

"1. There is no need for a first cause or for a cause of why

58. Capaldi op. cit. 52
59. " " " 53
60. Capaldi op. cit. 54

something exists or begins to exist.

2. Since the change of motion is produced by an external body, no examination can reveal a potential to be moved. There is no built-in necessity or essence. In short there are no formal causes.

3. Since change of motion is produced by an external body, no examination of an isolated individual object can reveal its potential to be a mover or to move another object or its power to be a mover. In short, efficient causes can only be discovered empirically and after the fact.

4. If (3) is true, then there is ground for the assumption that an efficient cause must embody the same essence as the effect. In other words, no observation of the effect alone can justify any assertion about the nature of the cause.

5. If the rest is not universally natural, then there is no end to be realized. In short, there is no final cause."[61]

The theological implications of Newton's theory of causation were considerable. The traditional cosmological argument had now to be thought through completely. Cosmology had to become more dynamic. It was not so much the initial impulse which set in motion the train of events that mattered, as the divine control of the principle of what we call 'causation'. This new understanding did not eliminate the need for the major Fiats of Creation, and some have even read into Hume's theory the need for the Big Bang theory. Rather, it helped to demonstrate the principle of causation through which the Fiats came about. It is interesting to see how Hume interpreted Newton's understanding of causation:-

"I need not examine at length the <u>vis inertiae</u> which is so much talked in the new philosophy, and which is ascribed to matter. We find by experience, that a body at rest or in motion continues for ever in its present state, till put from it by some new cause; and that a body impelled takes as much motion from the impelling body as it acquires itself. These are facts. When we call this

61. Capaldi op. cit.

> a vis inertiae, we only mark these facts, without pretending to have any idea of the inert power; in the same manner as when we talk of gravity, we mean certain effects, without comprehending that active power. It was never the meaning of Sir Isaac Newton to rob second causes of all force and energy; though some of his folowers have endeavoured to establish that theory upon his authority. On the contrary, the great philosopher had recourse to an etherial active fluid to explain his universal attractions; though he was so cautious and modest as to allow, that it was a mere hypothesis, not to be insisted upon, without more experiments. I must confess, that there is something in the fate of opinions a little extraordinary. Descartes insinuated that doctrine of the universal and sole efficacy of the Deity, without insisting upon it. Malebranche and other Cartesians made it the foundation of all their philosophy. It had, however, no authority in England. Locke, Clarke, and Cudworth, never so much as took notice of it but suppose all along that matter has a real, though subordinate and derived power. 62

A straightforward discussion of the theological implications of Newton's theory of causation is not possible in relation to what Hume had to say about it, because, although he understood well the empirical basis of Newton's demonstration - as the above passage shows - his own understanding of perception raised the psychological question of how the human mind grasps the principle of causation. That kind of question is not asked very often by philosophers today, but in Hume's time it came to assume a very great significance. It is a key question in the understanding of Hume's approach to empiricism, which, according to Mary Shaw Kuypers, "is not dependent on the psychological analysis in which it is embeded." 63 Kuypers is responding to the criticism that, " ...Hume reduced causation to wholly psychological terms and thereby completed the process of turning the objective world into a subjective one which Locke and Berkeley had initiated in England. Hume led himself and his commentators into difficulties by accepting the

62. Enquiry, by David Hume. Sec. VII Part 1 (See Kuypers op.cit. 78)

63. Studies in the 18th. Century Background of Hume's Empiricism. by M.S. Kuypers. New York Russell and Russell in 1966.

premises of phenomenalism and then discarding them at the most important points in his argument." 64

According to Kypers, Hume's doctrine of causation had two parts which have been indicated in the preceding paragraph. (a) There was the account of causation as an objective order. (b) There was a description of the psychology of belief 'in the necessity of causes'. Hume dicusses the distinction in the following passage:-

> "as to what may be said, that the operations of nature are independent of our thought and reasoning, I allow it; and accordingly have observed, that objects bear to each other the relations of contiguity and succession; that like objects may be observed in several instances to have like relations; and that all of this is independent of, and antecedent to the operations of the understanding. But if we go any farther, and ascribe a power or necessary connection to these objects; this is what we can never observe in them, but must draw the idea of it from what we feel internally in contemplating them."65

Hume further argued that our knowledge of the cause-and-effect relation is never due to <u>a priori</u> reasonings, but to experience:-

> "Adam, though his rational faculties be supposed, at the very first, entirely perfect, could not have inferred from the fluidity and transparency of the water that it could suffocate him, or from the light and warmth of the fire that it could consume him. No object ever discovers, by qualities which appear to the senses, either the causes which produced it, or the effects which arise from it; nor can our reason unassisted by experience ever draw any inference concerning real existence and matter of fact." 66

This gave a special status to what can be known from experience, a status which at a later stage was to create many problems for Logical Positivism.

64. Kuypers op. cit. 74
65. " " " 75
66. " " " 76

> "There is nothing in an object considered in itself, which can afford us a reason for drawing a conclusion beyond it, and even after the observation of the frequent or constant conjunction of objects, we have no reason to draw any inference concerning any object beyond those of which we have experience."[67]

From one passage in the Enquiry it is clear that Hume was willing to accept that we can infer from nature what is likely to happen in a given situation:-

> " (Belief) must be excited by nature, like all other sentiments, and must arise from the particular situation in which the mind is placed in any particular juncture.
>
> Here, then, is a kind of pre-established harmony between the course of nature and the succession of our ideas; and though the powers and forces, by which the former is governed, be wholly unknown to us; yet our thoughts and conceptions have still, we find, gone in the same train with the other works of nature."[68]

On Hume's emphasis upon inference as a psychological phenomenon rather than a logical one, Kuypers writes - "...it was the common assumption of this time that valid reasoning must rest on self-evident first principles."[69] So that Hume was advancing an account which leant towards Intuitionism . The bulk of the evidence, however, suggests that his view of causation was an unnecessarily blinkered one, because of the subjectivism which was implicit in his psychology of perception, as well as because of the central place which he gave to experience in his theory of how we form beliefs. Because of his appeal to what can be known through our imperfect senses, Hume found it impossible to appeal to a more objective and reliable authority - such as Hutcheson's intelligent first cause - which, the Theist would claim, is required to explain the origin and

67. Kuypers op. cit. 76
68. " " " 77
69. " " " 77

and integrity of the world in which we live.

b. The Ontological argument, or, to paraphrase Anselm's definition - 'a being greater than which cannot be conceived not to exist'.

Hume would have had little difficulty in agreeing that it was possible to conceive of such a Being, just as he would have had no difficulty in agreeing that it was possible to conceive of Heaven, but only in the sense that this Being or this Heaven had been created in the imagination. As we saw in the Chapter which deals with how beliefs are formed, he would have said, 'we just conceive of such a being'. They formed no part of his system of beliefs proper. That system tied in beliefs with a version of what the Logical Positivists were later to call - 'the principle of verification'.

For reasons which are now all too clear, that account of beliefs was too subjective and dogmatic. The process by which we form beliefs is vastly more complicated than Hume had appreciated, so that it is almost impossible to distinguish between imagination and beliefs proper in the way in which he suggested. Beliefs are not formed in the direct, causal way in which he thought they were, nor has a criterion come to light to enable us to distinguish what is the product of our imagination and what is the product of that area of the brain 'where beliefs are formed'. The inter-relationship between all the functions of the brain and nervous system is such that we are, in the end, forced to fall back on the judgement or witness which we make as individuals in the entirety of our personalities.

In the Dialogues Hume set out the main questions, according to his interpretation, which are raised by the Ontological argument:-

> "Whatever exists must have a cause or reason of its existence; it being absolutely impossible for anything to produce itself, or be the cause of its own existence. In mounting up, therefore, from

> effects to causes, we must either go on tracing an infinite succession, without any ultimate cause at all or must at last have recourse to some ultimate cause, that is necessarily existent:... What was it, then, which determined something to exist rather than nothing, and bestowed being on a particular possibility, exclusive of the rest? External causes, there are supposed to be none. Chance is a word without meaning. Was it nothing? But that can never produce anything. We must, therefore, have recourse to a necessarily existent Being, who carries the reason of his existence in himself; and who cannot be supposed not to exist without an express contradiction. There is consequently such a Being, that is, there is a Deity."[70]

Again, in the Dialogues, Hume takes exception to the claim that anything can have a necessary existence:-

> "I shall begin with observing, that there is an evident absurdity in pretending to demonstrate a matter of fact, or to prove it by any arguments a priori. Nothing is demonstrable, unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing that is distinctly conceivable implies a contradiction. Whatever we (can distinctly) conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no Being (i.e. thing we can distinctly conceive as existent), therefore, whose existence is demonstrable."[71]

The use of 'demonstrable' in the above passage can be considered a rough equivalent of the 'verification principle' which is found in Logical Positivism. Hume was narrowing down 'what is demonstrable' to a bare minimum. He was insisting on the strictest empirical criteria. For Hume 'ises' and 'oughts' belonged to two quite separate categories. But, having laid down this standard so inflexibly, what had he established? It was not until the 20th. Century that it was appreciated fully just how much Hume's definition of 'what is demonstrable' had rendered meaningless.

70. Hume's Philosophy of Religion. by J.C.A. Gaskin. London, MacMillan Press Ltd., in 1978. 59

71. Gaskin op. cit. 60

A great number of questions which had been exercising the minds of theologians and philosophers for centuries, were now completely beyond investigation, if Hume's idea of 'what is demonstrable' was to be accepted.

And yet, it would be equally wrong to suggest that Clarke's use of the a priori argument could be used to 'demonstrate' anything and everything. Hume was right to insist that the criteria used to determine whether or not something is 'necessary' or 'demonstrable' had to be tightened up considerably. The Theist might want to argue that the necessary existence of the divine Being which is affirmed in the Ontological argument, is a different and fairly unique use of 'necessary'. When the Theistic proofs are seen together rather than in isolation a concept such as 'necessary existence' is understood in a new light, as can be seen from the next paragraph. We can argue: 'if such and such is true, then such and such must necessarily follow'. What is not in doubt is that Hume reduced the 'what is demonstrable' category to the bare minimum, and consequently to an unacceptable degree. In the 20th. Century philosophers came to realise that this was not a serviceable definition of the principle of verification.

Gaskin points out that there is a second way in which the 'necessary existence of the Supreme Being' could be understood. And that it - the existence of a Being which has always existed and will never go out of existence. This does not prove that He exists, but this way of interpreting the argument elucidates, as Gaskin suggests, the Theistic doctrine of God. Gaskin is prepared to accept that Hume's objection to the view of how we can demonstrate the existence of something which is implicit in the Ontological argument, has another disadvantage:-

> "This is the way in which he conflates (in the Enquiry) the psychological notion of inconceivability with the logical notion of (self) contradictory and, in like manner, the notion of 'perfectly conceivable' with the notion of 'implies no (self) contradiction'. This mixing of the logical and psychological shows itself in the premise of his objection to Clake's a priori argument, paticularly in the premise...'Nothing, that is distinctly conceivable, implies a

contradiction'."[72]

To highlight this difficulty Gaskin quotes Jonathan Barnes:-

> "Although Hume gives no satisfactory account of what he means by 'conceive', what little he does say is enough for our purposes: his analysis of belief shows that 'P is believed' entails 'P is conceived' and hence 'P is conceivable'. But it is certainly possible to believe propositions which are logically impossible (everyone who makes a genuine mistake in mathematics or logic does so); and so it is possible to conceive propositions which are logically impossible."[73]

While this difficulty may not overthrow completely the main thrust of Hume's argument, it is sufficiently serious to show that it was fundamentally misconceived. Later attempts would be made to try to define in a clear-cut way what is demonstrable and what is not - in particular when dealing with as abstract a concept as that of 'a Being which cannot be conceived not to exist', but these also have never been fully successful. 'What is demonstrable' is either defined too narrowly, so that we can only ever be really certain about a very limited range of facts; or, it is defined too broadly and becomes worthless. The Ontological argument is capable of so many subtle interpretations that it still retains a special fascination for scholars of the philosophy of religion.

c. The Teleological argument, or the argument from design. The Teleological argument follows on from the Cosmological argument, once it is accepted that the principle of causation is more than the blind laws of nature operating on their own. The Theistic view is that the workings of the universe are governed ultimately, by an omnipotent God. Once that position is accepted, then it must follow that divine, omnipotent power operates in a controlled rather than random way to produce the world in which we live rather than a universe of primeval chaos. So that to the

72. Gaskin op. cit. 62

73. " " " 64

argument that divine omnipotence is behind the principle of causation, there must be added the Teleological argument, which is that the universe displays quite amazing order.

> "What Newton had contributed to this venerable proof - the one of Aquinas's Five Ways anticipated as far back as Anaxagoras - was the strengthening of the major premiss. Evidence of design must have impressed the earliest disinterested observer of the natural order."[74]

Hume too, for a while at least, took this argument seriously. Newton had become the illustrious pioneer of the new physics. He had built his scientific framework from the ground up. He knew it inside out. So much so that scientists became amazed at his grasp of how a host of physical processes work. This degree of precision was unheard of in the past. Newton seemed to have grasped a sound understanding of planetary motion and the law of gravity. The one conviction which was being strengthened by all these discoveries was that there is order in nature. The more Newton found out about the workings of the laws of nature, the more he was impressed by their resemblance to something which has been made by an intelligent Creator. What Newton was saying from the physical sciences appeared to confirm what religious thinkers had been saying in the past. Hume, who had not been slow to expose any weaknesses in the other Theistic proofs, was now keenly aware of the conclusion which Newton was drawing from science. A.J. Ayer in his small volume on Hume is ready to confirm this:-

> "Hume nowhere proclaims himself an atheist. On the contrary, in the 'Natural History of Religion' and elsewhere in his writings he professes to accept the argument from Design."[75]

This may be one of the passages which Ayer had in mind:-

> "The whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and

74. Hume's Philosophical Development. by J. Noxon. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press, in 1973. 66

75. Hume. by A.J. Ayer. Published by the Oxford University Press, in 1980. 23

> no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and religion."[76]

At this point it has to be admitted that Hume's dependence on Newton's work as a scientist was very considerable. And his admiration for Newton went beyond his work as a scientist, because he clearly admired his personal qualities as well. But even that well known fact does not prevent Noxon asking: "...Hume accepts the premiss (that is behind Newton's interpretation of the argument from design), but questions the inference. Does he, then, merit his reputation as a Newtonian methodologist?"[77]

The answer to Noxon's question is almost certainly that he does, because his dependence on the matter of Newton's thinking as a scientist was complete - he had after all aspired to become a 'Newton' of the moral sciences. Moreover, Newton's religious convictions were tied up so completely with his scientific theories that it is difficult to see how Newton's position could be defined apart from the entire Newton. It is not as though Hume had reservations about the excellence of Sir Isaac Newton:-

> "In Newton this Island may boast of having produced the greatest and rarest genius that ever arose for the ornament and instruction of the species. Cautious in admitting no principles but such as were founded on experiment; but resolute to adopt every such principle, however new or unusual; from modesty ignorant of his superiority above the rest of mankind; and thence less careful to accommodate his reasonings. ..."[78]

And, while Newton's theories may not have stood up to the light of later discoveries, it would be absurd to suggest that Hume had reservations about them because he anticipated that they were too static. In this whole field, Hume was heavily indebted to Newton. If anything, some of Hume's own theories reveal the outlook associated with the receptacle

76. The Natural History of Religion. by David Hume, op. cit. 25
77. Noxon op. cit. 67
78. " " " 71

theory of space and its iron clad laws, which was in time to be replaced by a "...relational and dynamic concept of space."[79]

To show that Hume was prepared to give a hearing to the arguments against the religious interpetation of the principle of teleology, it is only necessary to refer to what PHILO has to say on the matter in the Dialogues.

> "Did I show you a house or palace where there was not one appartment convenient or agreeable; where the windows, doors, fires, passages, stairs, and the whole oeconomy of the building were the source of noise, confusion, fatigue, darkness, and the extremes of heat and cold; you would certainly blame the contrivance without farther examination. The architect would in vain display subtilty and prove to you, that if this door or that window were altered, greater ills would ensue." "If you find many inconveniences and deformities in the building, you will always, without entering into any detail, condemn the architect."[80]

Philo lists four flaws which condemn the universe as the work of Cleanthes's deity:-

1. "...pains, as well as pleasures, are employed to excite all creatures to action, and make them vigilant in the great work of self-preservation."

2. "...the conducting of the world by general laws; and this seems nowise necessary to a very perfect being."

3. "...the great furgality with which all powers and faculties are distributed to every particular being."

4. "...the inaccurate workmanship of all the springs and principles of the great machine of nature."[81]

This more critical approach to the Teleological argument was written some time after the initial impact of Newton's religious interpretation

79. Torrance op. cit. 29
80. Dialogues, by David Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 321
81. " " " " 322

of the argument from design had made its mark. Scholars were beginning to ask if it was as simple and straightforward as Newton had been suggesting: was the analogy from a machine sound? Kant in particular was to subject this argument to very thorough scrutiny, so that by the time Hume had made his final revisions to the Dialogues several criticisms of the Teleological argument were well developed. All the same, it would still be wrong to conclude that PHILO spoke for Hume. PHILO may have spoken for one part of him, but other voices can be heard speaking from him as well. In the passage from the Natural History of Religion which A.J. Ayer quoted when coming to the conclusion that here, as elsewhere, Hume professed to accept the argument from Design, we have an example of a passage where another of these voices is heard. Hume would certainly have been familiar with a number of versions and defences of the Teleological argument. While he was studying in Edinburgh in 1725, Francis Hutcheson published The Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.

> "Hutcheson took his model from the natural sciences as he understood them."
>
> "In his lectures in natural theology he opened to his students view 'a large field of science of which they had no conception' when he pointed out to them 'the numberless evidences of wonderful art and design in the structure of particular things and the still more astonishing evidence of the wisest contrivance, ...in the whole material system considered as one design'."[82]

In Descartes the analogy was that of a machine:-

> "The perception on which we can found an indubitable judgment must be notably clear but also distinct. I call clear that perception which is present and manifest to an attentive mind, just as we are said to see objects clearly when, being present to the gaze of our eyes, they operate on it sufficiently strongly

82. The Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue. by F. Hutcheson. Published 1725.

...But I call distinct that perception which is so precise and so different from all others that it contains within itself only that which appears plainly and evidently (manifestment) to whoever considers it properly."[83]

"We conceive it as belonging to God's perfection, not only that he should himself be unchangeable, but also that his operation should occur in a supremely constant and unchangeable manner... Consequently it is most reasonable to hold that, from a mere fact that God gave pieces of matter various motions at their first creation, and that he now preserves all this matter in being in the same way as he first created it, he must likewise preserve in it the same quantity of motion."[84]

"...when somebody possesses the idea of a highly complicated machine, we are justified in asking from what cause he derived it; did he somewhere see such a machine made by somebody else? Or is it that he has made such a careful study of mechanics, or is he so clever that he could invent it on his own account, although he has never seen it anywhere."[85]

In Locke the analogy was that of an architect:-

"But the coherence and continuity of the parts of matter, the production of sensation in us of colours and sounds...by impulse and motion, nay, the original rules and communication of natural connection with any ideas we have, we cannot but ascribe them to the arbitrary will and good pleasure of the wise Architect."[86]

In Berkeley God was the 'author of Nature':-

"By diligent observation of the phenomena within our view, we may discover the general laws of nature, and from them deduce the other phenomena, I do not say demonstrate; for all deductions of that kind depend upon a supposition that the Author of nature

83. The Principles. by Descartes 1,45 A.&.I VIII(Gaskin op.cit.) 132
84. Descartes op. cit. II, 36 (Gaskin op. cit.) 149
85. " " " " " 170
86. Gaskin op. cit. 191

always operates uniformly, and in a constant observance of those rules we take for principles: which we cannot evidently know."[87]

Leibniz took an approach to teleology which was fundamentally different to that of the Cartesians and 'occasionalists'. He belonged to the 'empiricist' school along with Boyle, Locke, and the Newtonians, Berkeley and Hume. They believed that matter is passive - "...the very term 'inanimate matter' denotes this general presupposition."[88] For Leibniz, "...the world obeys, or exists in accordance with, principles of perfection as fashioned by God."[89] by 1696 he writes in the Tentamen:-

"...the principles of mechanics themselves cannot be explained geometrically, since they depend on more sublime principles which show the wisdom of the Author in the order and perfection of his work."[90]

Kant became deeply influenced by the approach which Leibniz had taken. They were both 'transcendentalists'; Kant an idealist and Leibniz a realist. Both gave science a central place and science as developed along particular methodological principles, such as 'continuity, economy, and causality'. Mathematics and particularly geometry played a major part in the understanding of some of Leibniz's theories about teleology, and he used this system to demonstrate that the world's systems contribute to the best possible order. He is associated with the view that this is 'the best of all possible worlds'. For Leibniz, some of his mathematical principles were seen to be nothing less than eternal truths which were part of his metaphysical system. That is why he sometimes referred to to the general order as being governed by the 'most general laws of God'. He distinguished between these and more ordinary laws of nature, which he calls 'subordinate maxims'. God established them and uses them, but indirectly, so that this system saw God as intervening in Nature in a less direct way than that anticipated by Newton and the Theists. According to Buchdahl, Kant took up a position somewhere between Newton's idea

87. Gaskin op. cit. 306
88. " " " 40
89. " " " 426
90. " " "

of space as an empty vacuum and Leibniz's theory of relational space. Buchdahl also claims that it was Newton's Principia which was the 'first great scientific initiator of Kant's thought'. As Kant himself put it, he set out to "...discover the systematic element which links the great members of creation with the whole context of infinity."[91]

In the Principia Newton had stated that the system which he had uncovered behind the laws of nature "could only proceed from the counsel, and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being."[92] When Kant returned to this question some years later he began to see the philosophical difficulties surrounding Newton's attempt to prove that the systems which operate within the universe demanded an intelligent and powerful Creator. Kant was no longer satisfied that it was necessary to postulate the existence of God to explain the natural laws in question, nor could God's existence be necessarily inferred from them. This did not mean that he had ceased to be impressed by the Teleological argument, but that he was no longer prepared to agree with Newton that teleology led to only one conclusion. For Kant the whole Creation is still seen as a wonderful 'artefact' or piece of natural engineering; but it need not be anything more than that - an amazing example of natural, cosmic engineering. Kant would have been ready to concede that nature can be seen as a technical model, and because of that he can see the 'puposiveness of nature' or the 'formal teleology of nature', but his account of what brought this about is no longer along strictly Newtonian lines.

> "Final causes do not 'exist': things are not organised teleologically. Rather, they are to be viewed by us under the guidance of the notion of a teleological organisation: this point of view acting as a 'guide for the investigation of nature'."[93]

Hume, whose approach to teleology along with Kant's was more philosophical than scientific, may have come to agree with Kant on the validity of the religious Teleological argument. Hume had after all awakened the

91.	Gaskin	op. cit.	427
92.	"	" "	484
93.	"	" "	485

sceptic in Kant. But Newton was the empirical scientist! They found it difficult to argue with much conviction against Newton's religious interpretation of the principle of teleology, other than by reverting to their own philosophical systems. These systems were far from perfect, and in particular they were weak when faced with the task of evaluating the raw information which was being supplied by empirical scientific research. Out of respect for Newton, Hume did attach greater significance to the argument from design than Kant himself and many later Kantians.

d. The Moral argument. Kant in particular felt that the Moral argument was the right starting point for natural theology. The conviction that there is a moral power present in the universe comes through strongly in Kant's ethical writings. This view presupposes that there must be a being, who, as lawgiver and judge, gives force to the major moral imperatives.

> "If we assume a moral nature for man, then we must (Kant argues) also see this morality as postulating the reality of a God, as an expression of the necessary fulfilment of the conditions that alone can realise the full exercise of moral activity."[94]

At first sight it is tempting to imagine that Kant's approach had got round the difficulties which had attended the other Theistic arguments. With the advance of science Kant may have felt that what Hume at times claimed would happen was coming true: namely, that science was beginning to give a reason for everything, removing the religious hypothesis completely from mysteries which up until then had had no natural explanation. Newton had revolutionized the Aristotelian understanding of 'causation'. Fresh scientific insights were making the analogy of the universe as an artefact which called for the constant activity of a wise Creator, inappropriate. Kant may have felt that the Moral argument would at least take the defence of the belief in God to a plane where it would not be at risk from what science had still to reveal.

What he succeeded in doing, however, was to narrow the base which

94. Gaskin, J.C.A. Hume's Philosophy of Religion
London, Macmillan 1978.

supported the Theistic belief in God, from five main arguments to one. Even that may be a little generous, because, instead of the Moral argument leading the enquirer to a true study of God, Kant's system was to deal mainly with the force of something which might be referred to as - moral obligation. It could be argued that the categorical imperative lost much of its force once God, the Law giver, was removed from the picture. To that extent God's existence was very important to Kant's system: all the same, the Kantian understanding of the moral law became increasingly about a moral code for living, rather than a religious framework of beliefs of which moral obligation was merely a part. The Moral law, as that which provides us with a code on how we should live, was to become so central in Kant's outlook that other theological questions were pushed out of the picture almost completely. Much of what Kant had to say about the Moral Law was admirable, and fully in harmony with the teaching of Jesus in passages such as the Sermon on the Mount. Some may wish to argue that his use of the Moral argument presupposed God's existence and the truth of the Christian faith. In a sketch of his life John Richarson was able say:-

> "The true criticism on his moral character, as well as the most sublime panegeric that can be made on him, is, That he earnestly and stedfastly endeavoured to practice what he professed, to make the moral law, the great comprehensive rule of duty, the spring of his actions. For, his life was, so to say, a commentor illustration to his pure doctrine, and almost exemplified it, or was as nearly led up to it, consequently he, by precept and example, came as near the idea of a sage, or of a perfectly wise and virtuous man, as perhaps the frailty inherent in human nature allows."[95]

Nevertheless, Kant's writings have the capacity to blind us to what he was doing to the Theistic arguments. His high, transcendental Idealism which could be so inspiring, was not in tune with the Theism of a Bishop Butler, or the Christian empiricism of a Newton. Kant had been brought

95. Emmanual Kant. by J. Richardson. Published by W. Simpson and R. Marshall in 1819.

up in a philosophical tradition which found it difficult to address straightforward questions. The mundane, the simple and obvious, was somehow too ordinary to merit examination. Great theology and great philosophy had to be on a plane which was far higher than anything which the average person could take in. That was why it could only be written in a style for the initiated. Kant was capable of developing arguments at great length, with the greatest eloquence, which were nevertheless quite unsound.

At its best, Kant's development of the Moral argument occupies a unique place in moral philosophy, almost making us forget that what religion he professed was closer to Deism than Theism. Kant's work on the Moral argument will stand for all time as a fresh, modern interpretation of the moral law. Comparing his ethical system with Hume's, it is all too evident that Hume's Intuitionism was a poor substitute for Kant's exposition of the moral law. Kant's Groundwork has a note of moral authority which is quite lacking in Hume's writings.

For Hume, questions raised by the Moral argument extended into some of the other Theistic proofs as well. When discussing the Cosmological argument he did not confine himself to the question of the correct theory of causation, but went on to insist that we must not only find out about the first, uncaused cause, to whose initiative the chain of cause-and-effect processes can be attributed; but, we must go on to ask - 'what is the moral character of the Creator'? He knew that his own theory of perception could not deal fully with the question of how God's workings relate to cause-and-effect processes, but that did not prevent him from pointing out that the Cosmological argument, by itself, tells us little about what the Creator is like:-

> "...assert, that a being, whose volition is connected with every effect; ...gives us no insight into the nature of his power or connection."[96]

96. Treatise, by David Hume. Vol I. (Ed. Green & Grose) 530

This can be interpreted as a two-pronged attack, firstly on the Cosmological argument, and then on the Teleological argument. In both cases the main claim of the argument is undermined first: in the case of the Cosmological argument - the need for an uncaused first cause; and, in the case of the Teleological argument - the need for an intelligent Creator to account for the principle of teleology. Secondly, Hume went on to challenge the conclusion that, from the Cosmological argument and the Teleological argument combined, we can prove that the wise, omnipotent Creator is morally good. In this connection, there are two sets of passages which can be quoted from Hume's writings. The first puts forward the negative case. The second an optimistic view, moving closer to the Leibnizian view - that this is the best of all possible worlds. The contrast between these passages is at times fairly marked, forcing us to conclude that Hume stressed one view at one stage in his career and the opposite one at another. As both sets of arguments are developed at considerable length, it is wrong to be dogmatic that he held only to one view. It has already been argued that he favoured a 'cheerful disposition', or the optimistic view, when developing his anthropological model; so that there is good ground for saying that his most consistent view of life was optimistic.

The Theistic view that the Creator is morally good does not necessarily entail the conclusion that human life is painless or the Creation flawless. It does hold that the Creation is inherently good, so that the good teleological ends which demonstrate that goodness will eventually be fulfilled. According to this view, the good Creation of which Leibniz speaks is - 'the best of all possible worlds'. This claim turns back the question on those who would condemn the Creation as the work of an all-good, all-powerful deity by asking - 'is any other existence possible'?

But, the fact that the Creation is the best of all possible worlds reminds us of a basic moral distinction, which highlights the existence of an evil power in the cosmos. 'Evil' is the other side of the coin.

It is the dark tones in the painting against which the brighter colours and highlights stand out. To assert that something is good is to argue for the existence of evil. That, for the Theist is not the problem. The problem arises out of that state-of-affairs. It is summed up in Epicurus's presentation of the antinomy:-

> "Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?"[97]

That is a logical straightjacket from which the Theist cannot escape. It is a true formulation of the problem on theistic terms, and the only answer which the Theist can give is to say that in some ways God's power is limited. There are some things which He cannot and others which He will not do. It has to be remembered that Omnipotence is a concept which has been contributed to theology from the philosophy of religion debate, and in an extreme form does not belong to biblical theology. Theism must be defined from within the Christian tradition, rather than from a philosophical tradition. Two biblical passages have helped to define Christian tradition on this question:-

> "How clearly the sky reveals God's glory!
> How plainly it shows what he has done!
> Each day pronounces it to the following day;
> each night repeats it to the next.
> No speech or words are used,
> no sound is heard;
> Yet their voice goes out to all the world
> and is heard to the ends of the earth."[98]

"Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made ... So these people have no excuse at all..."[99]

97. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Part X.(Ed.MacIntyre) 315
98. Psalm 8. G.N.B.
99. Romans 1. G.N.B.

In two passages from A Treatise on Human Nature we can see how Hume understood the relationship between the Cosmological and Teleological arguments, in relation to the Moral argument.

> "Matter, they say, is in itself entirely unactive, and depriv'd of any power, by which it may produce, or continue, or communicate motion: But since these effects are evident to our senses, and since the power that produces them, must be plac'd somewhere, it must lie in the Deity, or that divine being, who contains in his nature all excellency and perfection. 'Tis the deity, therefore, who is the prime mover of the universe, and who not only first created matter, and gave it its original impulse, but likewise by a continu'd exertion of omnipotence, supports its existence, and successively bestows on it all those motions, and configurations, and qualities, with which it is endow'd."[100]

> "There seems only this dilemma left to us in the present case; either to assert, that nothing can be the cause of another, but where the mind can perceive the connexion in its idea of the objects: Or to maintain, that all objects, which we find constantly conjoined, are upon that account to be regarded as causes and effects. If we chose the first part of the dilemma, these are the consequences. First, We in reality affirm, that there is no such thing in the universe as a cause or productive principle, not even the deity himself; since our idea of that supreme Being is deriv'd from particular impressions, none of which contain any efficacy, nor seem to have any connection with any other existence. As to what may be said, that the connexion between the idea of an infinitely powerful being, and that of any effect, which he wills, is necessary and unavoidable; I answer that we have no idea of a being endow'd with any power, much less of one endow'd with infinite power. But if we change expressions, we can only define power by connexion;

100. Treatise, by David Hume. Vol. I.(Ed. Green & Grose) 454

> and then in saying, that the idea of an infinitely powerful being is connected with that of every effect, which he wills, we really do no more than assert, that a being, whose volition is connected with every effect; which is an identical proposition, and gives us no insight into the nature of his power or connexion. But, secondly, supposing, that the deity were the great and efficacious principle, which supplies the deficiency of all causes, this leads us into the grossest impieties and absurdities. For upon the same account, that we have recourse to him in natural operations, and assert that matter cannot of itself communicate motion, or produce thought, viz. because there is no apparent connexion betwixt these objects; I say, upon the very same account, we must acknowledge that the deity is the author of all our volitions and perceptions; since they have no more apparent connexion either with one another, or with the suppos'd but unknown substance of the soul. This agency of the supreme Being we know to have been asserted by several philosophers with relation to all the actions of the mind, except ...volition... tho' 'tis easy to perceive, that this exception is a mere pretext, to avoid the dangerous consequences of that doctrine."[101]

In the chapter dealing with Hume's philosophy of religion, attention was drawn to the probability that Hume's Natural History of Religion and his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion were conceived in outline at the same time. There would appear to be a contradiction here. Hume's Natural History of Religion gives us the fullest and most 'theistic' outline of his philosophy of religion. The difficulties which he had found in his other studies of the Cosmological and Teleological arguments appear to have been swept to one side:-

> "The whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion."[102]

101. A Treatise on Human Nature. by David Hume, Vol. I Longmans, Green & Co., 1874. 530
102. Natural History of Religion, by David Hume. op. cit. 25

Few scholars doubt that he believed the Cosmological argument to merit serious consideration. His Intuitionism may have let him as well to infer that man's capacity for moral reflexion is derived from God, the moral Creator.

There would seem to have been a turning-point in Hume's attitude to the need for religious beliefs. At some point before he wrote The Natural History of Religion - somewhere in mid-career - his outlook changed, justifying an observer's opinion that he "...was a Christian although he did not know it." The sceptical moods were to return, as his revisions of the Dialogues[103] would seem to indicate: take for example the view of life presented in this passage:-

> "A perpetual war is kindled among all living creatures. Necessity, hunger, want, stimulate the strong and courageous: Fear, anxiety, terror, agitate the weak and infirm. The first entrance into life gives anguish to a new-born infant and to its wretched parent: Weakness, impotence, distress, attend each stage of that life: and 'tis at last finished in agony and horror.
>
> Observe too, says Philo, the curious artifices of Nature, in order to embitter the life of every living being. The stronger prey upon the weaker, and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. The weaker too, in their turn, often prey upon the stronger, and vex and molest them without relaxation. Consider that innumerable race of insects, which either are bred on the body of each animal, or flying about infix their stings in him. These insects have others still less than themselves, which torment them. And thus on each hand, before and behind, above and below, every animal is surrounded with enemies, which incessantly seek his misery and destruction."[104]

PHILO and DEMEA enumerate the catalogue of woes which afflict multitudes. DEMEA quotes a great poet:-

103. Mossner op. cit. 570

104. Dialogues, by David Hume.(Ed. MacIntyre) Part X. 311

"Intestine stone and ulcer, colic-pangs,
Demonic frenzy, moping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Marasmus and wide-wasting pestilence.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans: DESPAIR
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch.
And over them triumphant Death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, tho' oft invok'd
With vows, as their chief good and final hope."[105]

DEMEA further suggests that disorders of the mind, "though more secret, are not perhaps less dismal and vexatious." As if to remind Hume that he had once enjoyed much better health and that his outlook had[106] been quite different then, CLEANTHES replies "I can observe something like what you mention in some others..." "...but I confess, I feel little or nothing of it in myself, and hope that it is not so common as you represent it."[107] To DEMEA, CLEANTHES sounds like one of Job's comforters, so that this answer merely provokes a fresh outburst of complaints and woes. All the same a doubt has been sown. A crack has appeared in PHILO's and DEMEA's defences. There is another side to the story: another, quite different way of looking at the world. CLEANTHES is never allowed to develop this angle at length, but he is at least permitted to sum it up.

"Your representations are exaggerated: Your melancholy views are mostly fictitious: Your inferences contrary to fact and experience. Health is more common than sickness: Pleasure than pain: Happiness than misery. And for one vexation, which we meet with, we attain, upon computation, a hundred enjoyments."[108]

It is not too difficult to imagine the real Hume whom we meet in most of his writings agreeing that that is a more objective way of looking at the world. The Dialogues are dialogues, rather than a piece of systematic philosophy. Hume was a highly trained debater, used to pursuing points to their conclusion; and, when necessary, becoming a devil's advocate. Those

105. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. . . 312
106. " " Hume, D. Hume's Ethical Writings Macmillans 1965. New York, 312
107. " " " 314
108. " " " 317

who understand debating tactics know full well that a good debater can make out a convincing case for a view which is not his own. That is why the arguments which are presented in the Dialogues must be seen within the context of an interplay between the characters. This is not a diatribe in which only one point of view is heard. It is a dialogue, or a series of dialogues on natural religion. The format is open-ended. That is why it is a mistake to draw too much out of the Dialogues. They must be interpreted in the light of Hume's entire output.

e. The Ethnological argument. The Ethnological argument is an argument from universal religious belief. If belief in God, or gods, or a deity of some kind can be found in every human tribe in the most far-flung corner of the world, then, this proves that God exists. This argument is similar to the Kantian version of the Moral argument, in that it argues from man's spiritual constitution to a belief in a transcendent higher power. Kant can be interpreted as saying that it is from man's sense of moral awareness that we can know that the universe is governed by moral principles. And who laid down these fixed standards which are obvious to us if we will think about it? The only answer is that there is a moral force present in the universe, which corresponds to the sense of moral awareness which we feel within ourselves. In the Ethnological argument, it is the belief in God that we all feel within ourselves. Does this universal religious belief prove that God exists?

We can already anticipate how this argument would fare when examined in the light of Hume's account of how our beliefs are formed. He would not have questioned that belief in some kind of deity is universal. Today that claim might be challenged as some societies have attempted to impose an atheistic creed on all its peoples. However, the situation was different in Hume's day, because travel was bringing to light the number of religions which existed in different parts of the world, and this was leading the philosophers of religion to say that this evidence of religious belief throughout the world was proof that there is a God.

But Hume would have gone on to qualify this admission by insisting that we must distinguish between 'belief in God' and the kind of cast-iron belief that we have about a scientific experiment which has been demonstrated before our eyes. In any case, left on its own, the Ethnological argument merely plunges us into total confusion, because the deities which are believed in by all the world's religions are so numerous and varied, that it cannot be claimed that this universal belief in God is due to a revelation which one God has made of himself.

> " 'Tis a matter of fact uncontestable, that about 1700 years ago all mankind were idolaters. The doubtful and sceptical principles of a few philosophers, or the theism, and that too not entirely pure, of one or two nations, form no objection worth regarding. Behold then the clear testimony of history. The farther we mount up into antiquity, the more do we find mankind plunged into idolatry."[109]

> "It seems certain, that, according to the natural progress of human thought, the ignorant multitude must first entertain some grovelling and familiar notion of superior powers, before they stretch their conception to that perfect being, who bestowed order on the frame of nature."[110]

If the Ethnological argument gives no clear guidance as to the nature of the deity on its own, does Hume himself provide us with the approach to a solution to the difficulty when he speaks of "...before they stretch their conception to that perfect being, who bestowed order on the frame of nature"[111]? May not mankind be moving to a closer understanding of 'that perfect being who bestowed order on the frame of nature' ? It is still a crucial question, and it is a question which enables us to see how universal belief in God can testify to the existence of a perfect being, even although He is understood in so many different ways by the world's religions.

109. Natural History of Religion, by David Hume. op. cit. 26
110. " " " 27
111. " " " 27

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In what sense is it in order to refer to Hume as a Theist, in view of his indulgence throughout his career in outbursts of anti-religious diatribe? Three arguments can be aduced to support that protest. 1. His main philosophical writings were strikingly secular in character, so much so that, despite the convention of the period to give scholarly writings a Christian flavour, he felt no need to conceal his sceptical tendencies. 2. Although a member of the Church of Scotland for most of his life, he was not a regular church-goer nor outwardly a practising Christian. He may have come into contact with the Moderate Ministers of the Kirk when he began to settle in Edinburgh, but he still had to be coaxed to attend Church Services. 3. In his later years illness reduced his contact with many of his Christian friends, and, with no publisher to censor his final revisions of his main works, he was at liberty to give vent to his anti-religious arguments without restraint. In the Life of David Hume Mossner (Oxford 1980) mentions that Boswell attempted to "...draw out the philosopher on the subject of immortality. 'He said he never had entertained any belief in religion since he began to read Locke and Clarke'." (p.597) But several scholars have rightly argued that not too much store should be set by what Hume may have said to Boswell! Was then the later Hume just as much of a sceptic as the younger controversial Hume?

Very few scholars who have studied a representative selection of his works have come to the conclusion that he could ever have rightly been called an Atheist. It matters not which period in his career we may care to examine. The quotation from David Hume by J.Y.T. Greig (Jonathan Cape, London, 1934) is highly revealing. "He had met Deists, plenty of them; he might agree to be described as one himself, though upon the whole, if he must be called something, Theist was a better designation; but as for Atheists, he really didn't believe that they existed." (p. 298) Perhaps

2.

A.J. Ayer speaks for the majority of Hume scholars when he writes:- Hume "...nowhere proclaims himself an atheist. On the contrary, in The Natural History of Religion and elsewhere in his writings, he professes to accept the argument from Design." (Hume A.J. Ayer, Oxford 1980 p. 23).

Was he then a Sceptic? (This could be the equivalent of Agnostic.) There is a sense in which his philosophy had a deeply sceptical side to it, rooted in the scepticism of Cicero as well as a scepticism about the reliability of the human senses. On page 195 of the thesis Hume's claim:- " 'Besides, I am as certain as I can be of anything (And I am not such a Sceptic as you may imagine) ' " is discussed, leading to the conclusion that there is a case for suggesting that he would not even have been happy about being given the label 'Sceptic'.

In Gaskin's 1988 Hume's Philosophy of Religion the case has been argued that Hume was an 'attenuated Deist' and in the passage quoted from Greig we saw that, for a moment, he seemed prepared to call himself one. But even that passage shows clearly that, if he was to be called anything, he would rather be called a Theist. (David Hume by J.Y.T. Greig, Jonathan Cape, London, 1934.) Gaskin acknowledges the force of Hume's rejection of the description Deist in the interview with Mrs. Mallet:- " 'Madam', he replied, 'I am no Deist'..." (The Philosophy of David Hume by N.K. Smith, Macmillan 1941.) It is highly improbable that he was in ignorance about the difference between Theism and Deism by the time he made these statements, for the simple reason that he had been brought up in a community which was steeped in theological inquiry. The Theism on which he had been nurtured was that of the Scots Confession, but by the time he began to draft the outlines of the History of Natural Religion and the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion he was also familiar with the five Theistic proofs of scholastic theology. In the thesis it is argued that his philosophy of religion was not taken from the Judaeo-Christian

tradition alone, but grew "...out of several religions found in the ancient world..." (p.104) and for that reason his 'Theism' was not just a straightforward exposition of the Theism of the Scots Confession. In Greig's David Hume page 251 there is a quotation from a letter in which Hume writes " '...all the Godly in Scotland abuse me for my account of John Knox and the Reformation'." He was no 'philosopher of the Scottish Reformation' in any straightforward sense. But, accepting that we can distinguish between e.g. the Theism of the Old Testament and that of the New Testament without sacrificing the concept of revealed religion, and that the Theism of the later Church was influenced by a good deal of pagan philosophy; it is still possible to accept that Hume held on to a version of Theism which retained some of the central elements of the Christian doctrine of God. Some of his secular admirers appear at times to speak with regret that that is the case.

> "Scotland, in spite of its Calvinism, or perhaps rather because of it, was in many ways closer to Europe than to England; it was no exceptional thing for Hume to travel to Paris in 1734, to stay in France for three years and to write his first book, the Treatise, at la Fleche on the Loire, where he had the use of the libr ary of the Jesuit college. It remains true that Hume had to pass from the narrow paths of a Presbyterian Calvinism, whose spirituality would often cast the shadows of a narrow, legalistic, and frightening deity, into the urbane, mannered rationalistic world of eighteenth-century letters. And this marks Hume for life. The shadows are never entirely removed." (Hume's Ethical Writings. by A. MacIntyre, Macmillan, New York 1965, p.10)

In the theology of scholasticism rational argument was given an almost equal place alongside revealed religion. That was why the so-called five Theistic proofs were given a place of such importance. Our study of Hume's probable attitude to the five 'proofs' is revealing, because he apparently attached greater importance to one of them than, e.g.

Kant, whose ideas have been more acceptable to a number of Christian scholars. It was noted that even Professor Huxley had to concede that what we find in Hume's Natural History of Religion is "...contentment with the argument from design." (Hume by Professor Huxley, Macmillan, London 1909, p.144) The passage in question is:-

> "The whole frame of our nature bespeaks an intelligent author; and no rational enquirer can, after serious reflexion, suspend his belief a moment with regard to the primary principles of genuine Theism and Religion." (N.H.R. p.25)

The influence of Newton on his thinking about Causation is of the greatest importance, because he obviously admired Newton as a person and respected his work; so that, even although the Cosmological argument had to be given a more dynamic interpretation, it still fitted in very well with the argument from Design.

It was argued in the thesis (page 159) that he was in a way supporting the Ethnological argument as well when he spoke about non-Theists such as polytheists stretching their conception "...to that perfect being, who bestowed order to the frame of nature?" (N.H.R. p. 26) All the preceding arguments are combined in the support of this third argument.

The Ontological argument fared less well at his hands, and, even although his refutation of it is not without weaknesses, he gives little evidence of believing that it has much to contribute in the defence of Theism.

In the case of the Moral Argument, we are left to feel that he at times gave vent too freely to the view that it is difficult to prove from our study of the Creation, the moral goodness of the Creator. It cannot be denied that there are long passages in the Dialogues where that view is expressed with no little passion. But are we justified in arguing that the finalview of the Creation which we find in the his writings is pessimistic? It has been shown that his writings present an opposite view as well..

The question of Hume's handling of the Moral argument raises the further question of his attitude to Theism and Deism. The Theism of revelation and the Bible taught that the deity is infinite, and this made God transcendent and unknowable in His essence. Augustine said that "...it is easier for us to say what He is not rather than what He is." Scholasticism "...affirmed the unknowability of God's essential being." Luther stressed the divine transcendence or otherness, Deus Absconditus. Calvin "...deemed it vain speculation to attempt an 'examination of God's essence'." Because of that Theism was better suited to dealing with the problems raised by the Moral argument. It did not offer pat answers or tidy solutions, even although the problem of evil remained unanswered. Deism, on the other hand, tended to brush the problem of evil aside as if it did not matter. It has been described as a religion of Nature which had great rational appeal to the freethinking academic community of the 18th. century. Deists could see how a Watchmaker Creator could have created the universe which Newton saw through his experiments. But, they felt, as this God was more detached than the God revealed in the Bible, who enters into human history and actively intervenes in human affairs; He would not be terribly interested in the details of how ordinary people led their lives. The Deists tended to think that Nature was inherently good, as was human nature; so that the problem of evil was considered not worth debating. (See thesis p.126f.) It has been argued that Hume was deeply unhappy with this attitude and that may have been why criticism of the Moral argument figures so prominently in the Dialogues. If Hume concentrated most of his fire on the weakness of the Moral argument, then, it is reasonable to argue that he had little confidence in the shallow optimism which the claims of Deism had created. Deism had a powerful attraction for a number of leading thinkers of his day, but his sustained criticism of the view that evil does not exist in our world, or is such a limited force as to merit dismissal, makes it abundantly clear that it had little appeal for him. The view which is being argued in this thesis is that it is possible to concede to Hume many of the points which he is making on this question without necessarily

inflicting serious damage on the Theism of Christian revelation. The Bible not only addresses the reality of evil in the world, but seeks to find an answer to it. Deism had created a major problem for itself by seriously playing down the reality of evil. We find the Deistic line of approach in Cleanthes' opening speech in section XI of the Dialogues:-

> "I scruple not to allow, said CLEANTHES, that I have been apt to suspect the frequent repitition of the word, infinite, which we meet with in all theological writers, to savour more of panegyric than of philosophy, and that any purposes of reasoning, and even of religion, would be better served, were we to rest contented with more accurate and more moderate expressions. The terms, admirable, excellent, superlatively great, wise, and holy; these sufficiently fill the imaginations of men; and any thing beyond, besides that it leads into absurdities, has no influence on your affections or sentiments. Thus, in the present subject, if we abandon all human analogy, as seems your intention DEMEA, I am afraid we abandon all religion, and retain no conception of the great object of our adoration. If we preserve human analogy, we must for ever find it impossible to reconcile any mixture of evil in the universe with infinite attributes; much less can we ever prove the latter from the former. But supposing the Author of Nature to be finitely perfect, though far exceeding mankind; a satisfactory account may then be given of natural and moral evil..." (Dialogues Ed. MacIntyre, Collier p. 320)

In that approach Cleanthes is arguing for a finitely perfect Creator, and if representative of a brand of Deism, shows a movement away from the transcendent, infinite deity of revealed Theism. As we follow the debate in the Dialoges we know that this speech prepares the way for a blistering response from PHILO.

In the Treatise Hume has already given expression to the view that - "...nothing can be more unphilosophical than those systems which assert that virtue is natural and vice unnatural." (Treatise Ed. MacIntyre p.201)

If the 'naturalism' which Hume has in mind is that of Deism, then we are justified in concluding that his difficulties with Deism began at a fairly early stage in his career.

So far it has been argued that his 'Theism' was not just the straightforward Theism of Christian orthodoxy, but that it drew on several Theistic strands. 1. Undoubtedly, the Theism of the Scots Confession. 2. Some of the arguments employed in the Five Ways of scholastic theology, and, especially the Design argument, the Cosmological argument and to a limited degree the Moral argument. 3. The minimalist Theism of the Old Testament and the fuller Theism of the New Testament.

His attitude to Revealed Christianity is significant as well. He felt, for example, that church buildings were important. In Mossner's Life of David Hume we find the following passage on page 545:-

> "When it was suggested to Hume that it was a waste of money to spend a million on the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, he responded - 'Never give an opinion on subjects which you are too young to judge'. St. Paul's, remonstrated Hume, 'as a monument of the religious feeling and sentiment of the country, does it honour, and will endure. We have wasted millions of pounds on a single campaign in Flanders, and without any good resulting from it'."

Against the statement about the after-life which he is supposed to have made to Boswell, another can be set which expresses a different point of view:- In Of the Immortality of the Soul he writes " ' By the mere light of mere reason it seems difficult to prove the Immortality of the Soul... It is the gospel and the gospel alone, that has brought life and immortality to light'." (Essays Ed. by Grose and Green Vol II p.399)

As this process of producing one set of quotations to prove one interpretation and another to prove another can be continued at great length without hope of a conclusive answer, it is in order to ask pointedly - 'was

he a Secular Intuitionist or a Religious Intuitionist'? If, as has been argued on page 1 of this thesis, he set out trying to become a Secular Intuitionist, then, either he continued to be one throughout his career, or at some stage abandoned the attempt because he felt such an Intuitionism could not be achieved. It has been argued that the latter is the case, and that all his major works should be read in the light of that development. The reason for his change of outlook, it has been suggested, was his exposure of the Naturalistic Fallacy, for which he has been held responsible by moral philosophers from the 18th. century down to the present day. This case has been argued in the thesis from page 77 f. His major works have to be read in the light of that problem, because it is an insuperable obstacle.

How does that interpretation affect the status of these works? They are still being read by moral philosophers all over the world as if Hume was satisfied with them completely, and that it is in order to use them with little or no alteration in the building up of ethical systems. But is that sound? If he saw fit to highlight the Naturalistic Fallacy and the near fatal effects it would have on the system he had been developing, would he have expected his successors to continue with the system without taking the difficulty into account?

Was he aware of the problem? Some scholars accused him of ignoring it, but were they right? It is such a major problem that it is most unlikely that he was not fully aware of what he was doing when exposing the Naturalistic Fallacy. What we can be sure of is that he did not set out to argue for a completely new system. Instead, he remained within the Intuitionist camp, content, it would appear, to remain in the shadow of his famous contemporaries, the Religious Intuitionists Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. We can still read Hume's main works in the light of that interpretation and find that they make good sense, but only when it is accepted that he was not a consistent secularist, and that he was at times a formidable critic of the secularist position.

It has to be admitted that few of his works were published exactly in the form in which they were written, either because he changed his mind in a way which made him seem unsure of his position, or, more frequently, because friends had seen the first drafts and urged him to alter them. It is very probable that his publishers would not have accepted them in their unabridged form. In The Life of David Hume (Oxford 1980) E.C. Mossner writes "Before attempting to meet Butler, Hume submitted his manuscript to drastic surgery, a section on miracles which he had composed at La Fleche being cut out." (p. 112) References to such alterations abound in works which deal with the text of Hume's writings. He was constantly revising what he had written. This undoubtedly creates a problem when it comes to offering a consistent interpretation of the position which he was developing, but we are helped by two considerations. 1. In the 1976 Oxford edition of The Natural History of Religion (op. cit) in an Introduction found on page 7 A. Wayne Colver wrote:- "With the composition of the Natural History of Religion and the Dialogues substantially completed before he was forty, Hume's career as an original philosopher was at an end. Apart from his History of England, the six volumes of which appeared between 1754 and 1762, he undertook no original work of any consequence. For the remainder of his life he devoted himself to what became an endless labour of revising and polishing his writings." So that his important philosophical work was undertaken in the earlier part of his career. Not a few Humean scholars have suggested that he was far from happy with the system he had developed, because what he had attempted was in some ways misconceived right from the outset. This aim has been referred to as the aspiration to become a 'Newton of the moral sciences'. It has been suggested in the thesis (p. 70f.) that he began to move away from that aim as his career progressed. If that is so then his Treatise and Enquiry must be read in the light of that change of view. 2. In spite of the revisions to most of his works, he can be seen to be progressing logically and consistently to a final position, which, it has been argued in the thesis, is closely related to the Intuitionism of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson. He shows a good deal of consistency on that point.

So that it is wrong to say that he showed no consistency. There is inconsistency which is the product of a confused mind, and there is also the inconsistency of a mind which is gaining a firmer grasp of an insight which is worth possessing, and a great number of scholars have come to the conclusion that the inconsistencies which we find in Hume's works belong to the latter category.

But what about his inconsistency on religious matters? Was he at heart a Secular Intuitionist? From the earlier observation about the amount of re-working which he had to undertake at an earlier period in his career, it can be claimed that his public image was in many ways false. Had he been permitted to publish his most controversial sceptical writings he may well, for example, have brought upon himself firm disciplinary action by the General Assembly. Why then did his friends make it possible for him to publish these highly controversial works, once the most anti-religious sections had been taken out? Several of these friends were Church of Scotland Moderates. There can be little doubt that they were convinced that what he had to say was of great importance, and deserved the attempt to improve its presentation. It is also possible that many of his contemporaries felt that the sceptical outbursts were not to be taken seriously because "...David was a good Christian at heart." (Mossner op. cit. p. 174). Just as the Atheists on the Continent felt that he had still 'too much religion', so, many who knew him well in Scotland found the claim that he was a Sceptic unconvincing. Had he been a dyed-in-the-wool Sceptic, it is very strange that he should have been so interested in what Bishops thought of his works and that so many of his friends were Church of Scotland Ministers. "Hume's most intimate and personal friends were Adam Smith and Gilbert Elliot, but the largest number of his acquaintances were Ministers of the Church of Scotland." (Studies in the Eighteenth Century Background of Hume's Empiricism. by M.S. Kuypers, Russell and Russell 1966 p. 13) He had the reputation of being an enfant terrible of the Arts, who gave enjoyment to his friends by his anti-Christian and anti-Clerical satire; and, his criticisms of religion are too

spirited to be dismissed as of no consequence. But, there are Ministers, to the present day, who have had to accustom themselves to a certain degree of anti-Clerical ribaldry in society at large, and even within the ranks of the Eldership, making it necessary to ask what significance should be attached to the anti-religious passages which we find in Hume's works? There were those within his circle of friends who had it within their power to initiate an action against him by the Church of Scotland, but they never thought that such a step would be justified. Seldom in the history of the Church of Scotland has it been felt that no Christian should ever have doubts or periods of spiritual darkness, which could lead to the utterance of views which are contrary to the Christian Gospel; because that is not the testimony of experience. The important question is whether that Christian continues to express these views so that he becomes confirmed in them.

In Hume's defence it can be said that a) he did agree to changes in his early works which his Christian friends advised, and that he was well pleased to learn that Christian scholars and even Bishops were interested in what he had written; b) he did write a fairly conservative Natural History of Religion at a time when he was being considered for a University Chair, and a number of his works of this period show a more sympathetic attitude to Christian Theism. c) at face value at least, a Christian is given the last say in the Dialogues. (Thesis 199f.)

Another interpretation of Hume's position has gained widespread acceptance this century (although there are signs that this interpretation is being questioned seriously again) and it holds that he became a Secular Intuitionist at an early stage in his career and that he continued in that conviction right up until the end. According to this view he agreed to give his main philosophical works a less secular appearance, not out of conviction, but to make their publication possible and so as not to offend his Christian friends. But, in view of the confidence with which he states arguments which are clearly supportive of his 'philosophical theism', this interpretation raises serious questions about his character.

It is no longer a question of the inconsistency which could be accepted in the output of a scholar who had a fairly lengthy career, but of very serious confusion, lack of courage and deception. It is by no means true that his most discerning contemporaries thought him confused, lacking in courage or capable of such deception, and, in more recent times, it was noted in the thesis, that A.J. Ayer described him as the 'greatest British philosopher'. (Thesis p. 189). It would be hard to see how such a claim could be justified were Hume to have ignored the counterfieting effect of lying to which he re fers on page 385 of the 1874 edition of A Treatise on Human Nature, published by Longman's Green and Co. According to Peter Jones in Hume's Sentiments (op.cit. p. 30) he was ready to adopt four general theses of Cicero which included Honestum and Moderatio, and as he wrote about the importance of honesty in several of his works, it cannot be claimed that he had not reflected on the ethical importance of being honest. In a section in the thesis which begins on page 192 we see a portrayal of Hume as basically open, sociable and honest. It has not often been suggested that we need to dissect his writings to get at what he really meant. These present us with contradictions and inconsistencies, but they are those of someone who is given to speaking his mind frankly.

As his writings fall into two periods of time a) the period before he was forty, by which time all his major works had been completed at least in outline; and, b) the period after he was forty, when he revised and polished these works, there can be no doubting the fact that he had to remove the controversial anti-religious passages from his first works in print. We then come to his mid-career when he wrote The Natural History of Religion a work so open to the argument from Design as to be considered conservative. Not anti-religious. Was he going through a religious phase, or was he hoping that the publication of such a work would help his application for a university Chair? Both explanations are possible, and they may to some extent coincide. Clearly here was picture of Hume as someone who could be taken seriously as a candidate for a university Chair, in a country with as conservative Christian views as Scotland. The public image of him had

changed considerably. But his applications were not successful, and he now found himself with time to revise his main works, because his appointments from the early 1750's until the late 1760's were not unduly burdensome and gave him access to good libraries. With no pressure to find a publisher for his works, as their earlier publication had won him fame throughout Europe as well as financial security, he was now free to issue further editions which had the controversial anti-religious passages restored. Why did he find it necessary to do this? It was with reluctance that he had agreed to the alterations which had to be made to the first issues, so was he now putting the record straight and publishing what he had intended to write? Or, were his old anti-religious attitudes beginning to come to the surface once again? There is a sense in which the problem with the earlier controve rsial Hume meets us again in the older Hume, now that he has secured the freedom to write and publish without restraint. And yet, as we go back to the younger Hume we remember that for many anti-religious scholars he had 'too much religion'. The younger Hume reacted with disbelief to the suggestion that thinking men could be atheists. If he had periods of doubt they do not appear to have lasted very long.

In the thesis much significance has been attached to the posthumous publication of the Dialogues. If any work can tell us his state of mind on religious matters, then it must be the Dialogues. The final draft was not finished until just before his death. Because he was so anxious that it should be published, he made specific provision for publication. Why? Because he considered it to be an outstanding example of British literature, which, indeed, it is now generally taken to be? Significantly, it is a work about religion! If he had his periods of anti-religious scepticism then they did not banish conside ration of religious questions from his thinking. But what is his attitude to religious belief in the Dialogues?

A case has been made in the thesis (p. 199f.) for accepting the concluding speech by Cleanthes at face value, and that his principles "...approach still nearer the truth." Leading Humean scholars have

differed totally about who should be selected the 'winner' among the personae of the Dialogues.

> " 'Every educated reader could discern at the time of its posthumous publication that Hume's Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion was modelled on Cicero's De Natura Deorum!." (Hume's Sentiments , Jones op. cit. p. 29)

In the Bobbs-Merrill 1970 issue of the Dialogues, Nelson Pike in an introduction offers the view:- "There is a clear sense in which Berkeley was the hero of Hume's first major philosophical work - a Treatise." "It may be that it is Berkeley who turns out to be the hero of Hume's last major philosophical work." "perhaps the winner (if there is one) is Bishop Berkeley." (p.238)

In the introduction to the Bobbs-Merrill 1970 edition of the Dialogues, Nelson Pike offers the view that, "According to Mossner... Cleanthes voices the views of Joseph Butler as they are presented in his Analogy of Religion. Mossner argues that at the time Hume wrote the Dialogues Butler was the leading exponent of the a posteriori method in theology ... Further, Mossner reminds us, Hume listed Butler among the major philosophical talents of the period. He was thoroughly familiar with and keenly interested in Butler's theological writings." (p. XVII) In other writings Mossner has drawn attention to that special relationship between Hume and Butler which always made him glad when Butler had responded positively to something he had written, so that, if Cleanthes voices the views of Butler, there may be even stronger ground for considering him the winner. The view taken in the thesis is that great care should be taken in pronouncing any single character 'the winner', but that if Hume was less critical of Theism than he often was of Deism, then the door has been left open for the winner to come from the side of religion.

Hume's fondness for the dialogue form is very revealing. It reveals him

as a man of letters as much as a coldly logical academic. He was as interested in the form in which the argument was presented as in winning the argument. This is seen in Section II of the Enquiries (2nd. Edition Oxford 1963, p. 132) where the argument is pursued once again through the dialogue form. It suited him because he could develop any argument he wished to the fullest extent possible without revealing his hand. Do we in fact find the real Hume in a superficial reading of any of his works? The real Hume always appears a little detached from the debate itself, above the sound of raised voices, delicately balancing this argument against that. And, as the Dialogues show, matters concerning religious belief are of the greatest importance to the real Hume.

In David Hume (Jonathan Cape, London 1934) J.Y.T. Greig states that "He tried to be a Theist." (p. 167) In an earlier section he quotes Professor A.E. Taylor:-

> " 'It is as certain' he declares, 'as anything in biography can be that Hume was, in point of fact, no anti-clerical zealot, but an amiable and easy-going man of the world whose chosen circle consisted largely of the Moderates among the Edinburgh Presbyterians'." (p. 162)

According to Grieg he was turned from a Presbyterian into a "...somewhat vague and doubtful Theist'." (p. 72) And that is about as fair a description of where the real Hume stood as can be found. Some writers have made much of a letter which he sent to Sir Gilbert Elliot dated 10th. March 1751, in which he "...all but directly confirmed the indentification of (the Philo of the Dialogues) with the author." (Nelson Pike op. cit. p. XVI). If the case for his being an atheist depends upon evidence of that sort: 'all but directly confirmed', then, it could be argued, it can never be conclusive. If we take the evidence as a whole, covering his entire career, then the evidence of what he said plainly in direct speech supports the view that he tried to remain a theist, even although, in Greig's description, he became a 'vague and doubtful' one.

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	page
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page

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page

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93. " " " 521

94. " " " 528

95. Emmanual Kant. by J. Richardson. Published by W. Simpson and R. Marshall in 1819.

96. Treatise, by David Hume. Vol I. (Ed. Green & Grose) 530

97. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Part X.(Ed.MacIntyre) 315

98. Psalm 8. G.N.B.

99. Romans 1. G.N.B.

100. Treatise, by David Hume. Vol. I.(Ed. Green & Grose) 454

101. " " " " 530

102. Natural History of Religion, by David Hume. op. cit. 25

103. Mossner op. cit. 570

104. Dialogues, by David Hume.(Ed. MacIntyre) Part X. 311

105. " " " 312

106. " " " 312

107. " " " 314

108. " " " 317

109. Natural History of Religion, by David Hume. op. cit. 26

110. " " " 27

111. " " " 27

Different Approaches to Hume.

In Hume's day his secular Intuitionism met with a mixed response. A few close admirers greeted the publication of his major works with excited acclaim. Hume, they were sure, was the pioneer whose lead other moral philosophers would follow. But many more were highly critical of his work on account of its secular character, some of it directed provocatively against established religious attitudes. Many Clerics and not a few people of influence belonged to this band of critics. To them Hume was an example of the type of freethinker whose ideas were undermining the foundations of morality. A smaller group of Clerics were more sympathetic to him, because they were more keenly aware of the significance of his work. As their number increased, even religious leaders of the standing of Bishop Butler could be heard encouraging the reading of some of his works. At no point, however, did he enjoy the public standing which Kant had attained in Germany. In the main his work was greeted with coolness.

By the 19th. century a group of British moral philosophers decided to make a fresh attempt at building on Hume's foundation: that of secular Intuitionism.

> "Hume starts from the position so central in the teaching of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, that the fundamental characteristics of all our goods, whether natural, aesthetic or moral, is that they are immediately pleasing, as determined by the 'particular fabric and constitution of the human species'."[1]

They too held to the principle that 'pleasure is conditioned by objectively directed passion and not visa versa'. To the question - 'why is justice approved?' Hume would have answered - instinct and 'utility'. With so many references to what is now known as Utilitarianism in Hume's works, his influence on 19th. century Utilitarianism can hardly be in doubt. In Hume A.J. Ayer insists that he was not the forerunner of "...Utilitarians like Bentham and Mill. We shall see that he associates

page

1. The Philosophy of David Hume. by Norman K. Smith. London, Published by MacMillan and Co., in 1941. 163

the conventional virtue of justice with regard to the public interest, but he by no means takes it to be a general feature of the objects of our moral approbation that they promote anything of the order of the greatest happiness of the greatest number."[2] Although Hume may not have referred to the 'greatest happiness principle' directly, he placed 'utility' in a universal context so often that it can fairly be said that he anticipated the greatest happiness principle.

Just as Hume had assumed it to be superfluous to prove that the 'benevolent or softer affections are estimable', so the Utilitarians at first imagined it unnecessary to define happiness. It was as though 'securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number' presented the really serious problem. If it is in any sense true that Hume's Intuitionism only made sense finally against a particular religious background, it may be more than coincidence that the gradual demise of early Utilitarianism kept pace with the decline of religious belief in Britain.

Even if we suppose that Utilitarianism had been able to supply a satisfactory definition of happiness, would that necessarily have secured an easy transition to the second step - the securing of the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'? The objectives which inspire the international relief bodies, such as the United Nations, OXFAM, and the Red Cross are objectives which could be said to represent an international consensus about what contributes to - 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. As ideals these objectives may have much to commend them, but frequently they appear to be very difficult to implement in practice. Intentions are often good, but the carrying out of them often leaves much to be desired. 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number' sounds much better as a slogan than as a call to action.

Critics of earlier Utilitarianism found it easy to advance a caricature of the theory by stating that, in its most basic form, it was preoccupied with the 'lower pleasures'. To meet this criticism a 'felicific calculous'

2. Hume. by A.J. Ayer. Published by the Oxford University Press in 1980.

was added to demonstrate that Utilitarianism attached greater importance to the 'higher pleasures'. Even so, without the driving force of religious convictions stated in clear terms, secular Utilitarianism waned in influence and prepared the way for the ethical theories of the 20th. century.

Secular Intuitionism revived in the 20th. century in a number of different forms. G.J. Warnock lumps together G.E. Moore, H.A. Prichard and W.D. Ross as belonging to the early Intuitionist camp, despite Moore's insistence that he did not belong to that group. Many of the old problems in ethics had returned:-

> "For Prichard there is no reason why what is right is right so, for Moore, there is no reason why what is good is good."[3]

Ross was charged with having asserted that 'good' and 'right' depend on other characters, and then not explaining "what this puzzling kind of dependence of some characters on others might be. Though he recognised the point he cast no light upon it."[4]

For a host of reasons the bald Positivism of Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic soon lost its early influence, a development which Ayer himself has accepted as right. It failed to satisfy the principlal conditions which it had laid down so inflexibly. It too did not belong to the 'two species of significant propositions'.

In this way Intuitionism had prepared the way for Positivism, which left an unwelcome legacy for moral philosophy. Ayer was to write:-

> "...modern logical researches was to make some philosophers despair of morals as a rational activity."[5]

Schlick suggested that "...so-called moral judgments really formulated rules, and that the only real question for a 'science of ethics' was the psychological question why certain rules came to be adopted."[6]

3. Contemporary Moral Philosophy. by G.J. Warnock. London, by MacMillan in 1967. 14

4. Warnock op. cit. 14

5. The Language of Morals. by R.M. Hare. Published by Oxford Paperbacks, in 1967. 45

6. Warnock op. cit. 19

The onerous responsibility of moral education was being committed increasingly to preachers and pedagogues, while the really great minds addressed the main questions which were now thought to be bound up with analysis. The new preoccupation was with the 'language of morals' rather than the 'faith of morals'.

Warnock writes:-

> "We wish to know what moral goodness is, or what it is for an action to be obligatory, and we are not told; for the 'qualities', we are told, are indefinable."[7]

Warnock writes:-

> "In becoming aware that some proposed course of action is, say, obligatory, I have, on this theory, added to my information, I have come to know a truth about the world. But what has this truth that I recognise to do with my behaviour?
>
> Why should I adopt that course of action rather than some other? The fact that the course of action is obligatory is presumably meant to be a reason for adopting it; the fact that it would, if adopted start on a Wednesday presumably is not. But why the difference? Why is some information about the properties of things and actions irrevelant to questions about what is to be done, while some other information is not? Moral judgments, it seems, like other judgments, convey information: what is it about the information they convey which makes it important for, or even relevant to, our decision, our choices, our advice, or our recommendations? We find, once again, that intuitionism has nothing to say here: in that theory, the relvance of moral judgment to conduct appears as a bare assumption, about which, as indeed about almost everything in the subject, there is nothing to be said."[8]

This outlook had the effect of closing off every reasonable approach

7. Warnock op. cit. 13
8. " " " 15

in the search for answers to moral problems. A cleavage had developed between the older approach to morality, public and private, in communities where rational argument had been used in the defence of Christian standards; and this newer approach, which had all the attitudes necessary to make existentialism acceptable.

It is precisely in this twentieth century setting that the fruits of the secular influence in moral philosophy can be seen at their plainest. Hume's aim had been to place moral philosophy on a new basis. It was now on that basis. But the secular influence made it increasingly difficult to pronounce with certainty on any moral question. That is why the presence or absence of religious convictions in the study of moral philosophy is a matter about which we cannot be indifferent.

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In a lengthy Introduction to one edition of the Treatise of Human Nature, T.H. Green led his readers to draw unfavourable conclusions from the whole drift of Hume's thinking. The conclusion such as "...he so empties morality of its actual contents..." was indicative of how many still reacted to Hume's view of human nature in the nineteenth century,[9] a conclusion which threw into question the legitimacy of his enquiries, or at least how he went about pursuing them.

There was by Hume's day a changed outlook to subjects relating to the study of man. The human body was becoming less mysterious. The science of physiology was making clear the extent to which a whole host of bodily processes operated on a functional cause and effect basis. It could be seen that pressure on certain parts of the brain produced particular sensations or reactions. Critics like Green were not then condemning him for sharing with Locke and Berkeley, the new interest in physiology; but, rather, for the way in which he dealt with the questions involved. There was nothing questionable about the legitimacy of the issues which he had raised. On the contrary. These were valid enquiries which were being pusued by thinking men in all academic institutions. It took

9. A Treatise on Human Nature. by David Hume, Vol. II(Ed. Green & Grose).

honesty and courage to talk about them in the first place, but it also took mature judgment to deal with them satisfactorily. Hume's pioneering contribution to the philosophical study of psychology, from a sound empirical basis, was considerable and has been rightly acclaimed.

At the same time, he did not fully appreciate the dangers of using in a free and unguarded manner, the supposition that we can look on man as nothing more than the sum of his physical parts. There are many situations in which those who have to handle the dead tissues of the human body are compelled to think of the body in that way. Not only does the anatomist have to adopt a dispassionate attitude to the corpse which he is to dissect in his laboratory, but, a whole army of trainee surgeons, doctors and nurses must follow the same approach. Because a Christian has chosen the profession of physiologist, we do not normally feel compelled to question the sincerity of his or her religious convictions. These convictions may be strong, and yet, faithfulness to duty may force them to handle parts of the human body as if they were mere lifeless matter. The reward for this difficult work is the knowledge that through it the health of patients can be improved. The work of anatomy and physiology can be undertaken with a good end in view, if it leads to an improvement in the health of patients. And thus, far from detracting from the dignity of the human body, this work can enhance it.

The problem arises when, through all the detailed dissecting of the tissues, the anatomist ceases to appreciate what the human body is when whole and perfect. The human body is not just the collection of its anatomical parts, but, for the Christian, 'home' for the soul. The Christian sees man as the bearer of the <u>imago dei</u>, and because of that even the dead tissues of a corpse should be handled with repect. There is indeed the possibility that too much preoccupation with the body and its workings will diminish those spiritual aspects of the human personality which are bound up with the <u>imago dei</u>, and Hume's error of judgment may

have been in this area. It may have been his expectation that within his own lifetime, psychology would have advanced to the point where it would be possible to account from it, for all the workings of the mind. He may have imagined that a straightforward causal explanation would be forthcoming to account for the workings of the mind - just as in the natural sciences, cause-and-effect explanations were being established on every hand. He may have supposed that the conclusion of his investigations would be the straightforward demonstration of how man's 'moral faculty' works.

Deeper investigation into this whole area was to make the possibility of supplying that demonstration, more not less remote; as Hume came to appreciate why the appeal to Newton's achievements in the natural sciences, was, in the sphere of moral philosophy, wholly inappropriate. This must have come as a major disappointment. Just as we would become concerned about the outlook of an anatomist who had come to take an obsessive interest in dead bodies and the dissecting of human tissues - because the anatomist's aim should be to go beyond this exercise to the promotion of the health of the living: so, too, in Hume's case, the fear must be expressed that he failed to go beyond the primitive view that "...men are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions that succeed each other with inconceivable rapidity,"[10] to an appreciation of the full potential of man, the bearer of the <u>imago dei</u>, as seen from the Christian standpoint.

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The breadth of Hume's appeal gives us some indication of the extent of his influence. Some Humean scholars have charged him with inconsistency because much of his work was exploratory, rather than systematic or definative. His work was syncretistic. That is why so many scholars have been able to interpret him from so many different angles. There is a great deal of evidence to support most of these interpretations, which

10. <u>Treatise</u>, by David Hume op. cit. Vol. II
T.H. Green and T.H. Grose

prompts the question - 'what did he really believe'? This leads to a further question - 'to what extent did he change his ground as he discovered new ideas'? The difficulty about accepting one interpretation of Humean philosophy as the final one is that the champions of the other interpretations will immediately object that that view is wrong, and bring forward evidence to show why their interpretation should be accepted. There is little doubt that Hume did change his mind a number of times about issues which were of central importance to what he understood his final position to be, but there was one question on which he did remain consistent, and that was his Intuitionism; that fact is vital to the argument which we will be following in this final section.

Although Hume's influence in his own lifetime was enormous, and remained a powerful force in British philosophy from then on, a thorough study of all his works was not undertaken until the late 19th. century. Even then, his views aroused great controversy, so that standard works on what he had written were often unsympathetic. Two authors of such works were T.H. Green and T.H. Grose, whose lengthy introductions to a two-volume set of Hume's A Treatise on Human Nature, set out to demolish much of what he had set out to establish. Green and Grose made a thorough study of Hume's writings, providing the 19th. century student with an authoritative guide to his works while at the same time evaluating the significance of this output from their own philosophical standpoint. If Humean scholars can be put into two camps - those who are finally unsympathetic to Hume's position and those who are not, Green and Grose belonged firmly to the former. In their introduction to the second volume of the Treatise they concluded:-

> "He has made abstraction of everything in the objects of human interest by their relation to our nervous irritability - he has left nothing of the beautiful in nature or art but that which it has in common with a sweetmeat, nothing of that which is lovely and of good report to the saint or statesman but what they share

> with the dandy or the diner-out - yet he cannot present even this poor residium of an object, by which all action is to be explained, except under the character it derives from the thinking soul, which looks before and after, and determines everything by relation to itself." [11]

We have already seen that Hume may have been too preoccupied with questions such as 'how the body works', so that spiritual considerations tended to be put to one side. The question which has to be answered is - was he responsible for creating this attitude, or was he simply part of a well established trend in British philosophy? There can be no doubt that Hume was caught up in a general change of outlook, because most of the terms which he used to define his ideas in his philosophical psychology were already in circulation by the time he began to write. Physiology as an exact science had been developing rapidly at most European universities. The view that man's conscious life has its basis in the nervous system stunned many of Hume's contemporaries. It is clear from Green's and Grose's reaction to that viewpoint, that it still created major problems for some scholars in the 19th. century. By the twentieth century, however, no scholar would question the truth of much of what Hume had been saying in this area. The modern doctor or surgeon would think it very strange if it were suggested that no account be taken of the body's systems in the treatment of the unwell. Patients and other members of the public would be outraged if a doctor were to ignore human physiology or fail to exploit the latest insights of modern medical science in treating a patient. To a very considerable extent what Green and Grose had to say on this point is now out-of-date.

At the beginning of the introduction to vol. 2, Green and Grose traced Hume's theory of human motivation to Locke's doctrine of animal pleasure or pain. Locke associated Good with pleasure and Evil with pain, a definition which re-appeared in 19th. century Utilitarianism. In addition,

11. A Treatise on Human Nature. by David Hume, Vol. II 53
Longmans, Green & Co., 1874.

Locke recognized three types of law:-

1. "Divine Law 'promulgated by men in the light of nature or voice of revelation'..."
2. Civil Law.
3. " 'The law of opinion or reputation'..."[12]

The question of moral goodness was bound up for Locke with the keeping of one of these rules.

Hobbes' understanding of how we make moral choices was similar to Locke's, but in his case 'pleasure' was seen to be the principal motivator in human behaviour. Theories belonging to this group were known as Hedonistic. Shaftesbury opposed this view because he wanted to feel sure that the pleasure in question was equated with a public rather than private system. The 'good' of true happiness is a social good which includes - "...parental kindness and concern for the nurture and propagation of the young..." and the pleasure which is to satisfy one individual is "...the consciousness that another is pleased."[13]

Butler looked to 'conscience' to make clear the distinction between good and evil. We are at once reminded of one aspect of Hume's Intuitionism. Butler called this "...the reflex faculty of approbation."[14]

Francis Hutcheson inclined to a position close to Shaftesbury's, believing that, that which we approve consists of "...the affections tending to the happiness of others and the moral perfection of the mind possessing them."[15]

Green demonstrated very fully that in following Berkeley, Hume had been led to major problems in knowing how to distinguish between questions about 'how the body works', and more spiritual considerations.

"Having no conception, then, of Spirit or Self before him but that of thinking substance, of which Berkeley himself had confessed

12. Treatise, by David Hume op. cit. Vol. II 19
13. " T.H. Green and T.H. Grose) " 24
14. " " " " " 27
15. " " " " " 28

> that it was not a possible idea or object of an idea, Hume had only to apply the method by which Berkeley himself had disposed of extended substance to get rid of Spirit likewise. This could be done in a sentence, but having done it, Hume is at further pains to show that immateriality, simplicity, and identity cannot be ascribed to the soul; as if there were a soul left to which anything could be ascribed." [16]

Having charged Hume with favouring an unspiritual view of man, Green and Grose rejected his system in favour of those propounded by Kant and Hegel. This reaction, while in keeping with the position developed in the Introductions to the Treatise, failed to take into account the fact that, Hume's position, when broken down into its constituent parts, was, as we have been observing again and again, indebted substantially to leading British philosophers of his time. That is why late in the 20th. century Hume is embraced by British philosophers as one of the outstanding and truly British philosophers of all time. It may have been that some of Green's and Grose's more perceptive criticisms were valid against the philosophers who influenced him as well; that is almost certainly the case. However, to blame him for all the shortcomings of British moral philosophy of the 18th. century requires a more convincing defence than was offered in these Introductions.

By way of complete contrast, in Norman Kemp Smith's The Philosophy of David Hume, and Ernest Campbell Mossner's The Life of David Hume, we have two full, modern studies of Hume and his philosophy which seek to vindicate his main ideas. A quotation from A.J. Ayer gives us an estimate of this school-of-thought's view of Hume. For Ayer, Hume should be considered "...the greatest of all British philosophers..." [17] These two major studies are representative of a huge body of literature on Hume written this century, in support of what it is believed the Scottish philosopher affirmed. Because of that, the sceptical tone which is often present in his works is not considered an embarrassment; rather, it

16. Treatise of Human Nature. by David Hume Vol.I 292
17. Ayer op. cit. 1

is admired. The fact that so many works have been published in support of a philosophical system which is 'naturalistic' rather than spiritual, is a reminder of how much times have changed. These writers do not say that Hume saw the complete picture, nor are they prepared to justify all his arguments because their shortcomings are discussed at length; but what they do say is that he was on the right lines. By acclaiming him 'the greatest of all British philosophers' they mean that he, of all the British philosophers of his day, saw with greatest clarity where the new ideas which were coming to light at this time were certainly leading. He was the outstanding British philosopher because of the quality of his work and the range of fields which he was able to master so completely; but more than that, they believe that he was centuries ahead of his time and that he anticipated in large measure the system which they themselves favour and seek to develop. In The Philosophy of David Hume Norman Kemp Smith outlined Hume's understanding of the function of philosophy thus:-

> "Here, as in the sphere of ethics and aesthetics, the function of philosophical enquiry, as Hume conceived it, is not to justify our ultimate beliefs, but only to trace them to their sources in the constitution of our human nature, and to show how, aided by reason, though themselves derective of it, they condition and make possible the de facto experience which is at once the subject-matter of philosophy and that by which its judgments can alone be tested."[18]

Norman Kemp Smith was the first Humean scholar to highlight the extent to which Hume had been influenced by Francis Hutcheson. Hutcheson's influence played a vital role in the formation of Humean Intuitionism, so that this discovery has been of help in identifying what is vital to Hume's main contribution as a philosopher. Smith's The Philosophy of David Hume is coming to be regarded as a key modern work on Humean philosophy, as it gives one of the most cohesive and consistent analytic expositions of Hume's position. For modern philosophers who

18. Smith op. cit. 458

would seek to build on that position, Smith's contribution represents a remarkable achievement, because it gives evidence of a defence of Humean philosophy from within. To those who object that Hume's position was too riddled with inconsistencies to ever be presented as a unity, Smith appears to offer an impressive answer. What is true is that he came to grips with what Hume was striving to say. There are times when Smith can sound like a modern Hume. He is steeped in Hume's background. This is where many studies of Humean philosophy fall short. They are studies which have been prepared in a library which is distant, geographically and culturally, from the Scotland in which Hume grew up. That is not the case with The Philosophy of David Hume. It places Hume exactly against the right background. Smith also writes as an admirer of Hume. Whereas a Francis Hutcheson would have recognized Hume's gifts as totally extraordinary, this admission would have been made with a measure of reservation, so that, for example, when it came to the question of Hume's application for the Chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, he sided with the Principal of the University in opposing it. Smith would have supported it; both for his admiration for Hume as a person, and even more because of the appeal of the position which he was developing as a philosopher. That is why Smith's writing style resembles that of a modern Hume: there is the same thorough grasp of the point at issue and the same flowing, elegant presentation of the argument. So that for modern disciples of Hume, this is a classic work. It demonstrates that Hume's position is a coherent position, and it argues that view in a lively, up-to-date style. In view of the impression which had been created by the Green and Grose studies in the 19th. century, Norman Kemp Smith's contribution has in many ways been a valuable corrective.

As well as demonstrating the crucial importance of Francis Hutcheson's influence on Hume's whole career, establishing him as an Intuitionist in the Shaftesbury-Hutcheson tradition, Smith traces the impact made by

other Scottish philosophers such as Reid. Again, this attempt to root Hume in the Scotland in which he was born and grew up is a much needed corrective to the other Hume s, such as the subjective idealist conceived by Kant, created "...partly of imperfect knowledge of Hume's writings, partly of prepossessions derived from a long previous training in German rationalism."[19]

Hume's aim, according to Smith, was to develop a science of human nature, and his philosophy can be interpreted as being "...fundamentally sceptical; it is positive and naturalistic, and, we may here add, humanistic in tendency."[20] In embracing such a philosophical system Norman Kemp Smith was setting the tone for other assessments of Hume which were to follow in the 20th. century.

In The Life of David Hume, Ernest Campbell Mossner fills in the background to Hume's upbringing and education. Again we find the high estimate of his influence which we encountered in The Philosophy of David Hume. "Hume's all-inclusive 'Science of Human Nature' has now become the study of specialists in many fields..."[21] Mossner conveys well Hume's search for this new philosophical system - a search which was to take him into the most unexpected places to meet the most unlikely people. The earlier part of Hume's career reads like a larger-than-life adventure. So much so that it would be easy to conclude that there was a part of him that was quite unsettled. If extensive travel throughout Europe was considered an essential part of the training of a promising poet, painter, composer or man-of-letters; then Hume must have been regarded as well-trained. And yet, Mossner's own evidence makes it clear that Hume was only ever prepared to move so far from his roots and no further. This can be illustrated from a host of biographical details which are to be found in The Life of David Hume.

> "Yet of David's kicking over the sabbatical traces as a boy, there is not the slightest indication."[22]

19. Smith op. cit. 80
20. " " " 154
21. The Life of David Hume. by E.C. Mossner. Published by the Oxford at Clarendon Press, in 1980. 5
22. Mossner op. cit. 34

"On his own word, he was 'religious when he was young'... "

"Taking his religion unusually seriously, the young David Hume was attracted to the task of soul-searching."[23]

There is every reason to believe that Hume enjoyed his contact with the Continent, both because of the cultural stimulation which he received from meeting society and the leading scholars of the day in cities such as Paris, as well as because of the opportunity it gave him to develop his ideas in a part of Europe where he was to achieve much fame. In theory he should have been in his element among sceptics and atheists who had become leading lights in the Enlightenment, but we have already noted the complaint that, whereas in Scotland he was considered as having too little religion, on the Continent he was, in certain circles, thought to have too much. This was a stage when he began to explore natural theology quite seriously. He enjoyed good relations with the Jesuits. He also came into contact with the Jansenists.

> "Abbe Pluche was indeed a learned man, a Jansenist and an anti-Cartesian, having held the chairs of Humanity and Rhetoric in the University of Rheims. He is particularly noteworthy for his Spectacle de la Nature (1732), a series of dialogues on natural theology."[24]

His stay on the Continent was not always agreeable, because travel was not always easy. On at least one occasion during his Italian visit he was so delirious with a fever that the back door of his quarters had to be locked and he had to be forced back to bed; there were times when he found the high cost of living in some of the great cities beyond his means; and, through it all he missed the Annandale home. On one of his returns to Edinburgh he wrote:- "In Edinburgh, 'The Guid Toun',...'I am here, Body and Soul, without casting the least Thought of Regreat to London, or even Paris'."[25] When he did eventually settle in Scotland again his interest in natural theology was to deepen.

> "...yet Hume was greatly interested in learning Dr. Butler's opinion of his philosophy. He had already written to Henry Home about Butler

23. Mossner op. cit. 34
24. " " " 97
25. " " " 659

> and was pleased to find that Henry too held the same high opinion of that divine;..."[26]

It is at times difficult to reconcile the sceptic outlined by Mossner in this passage:- "...his thinking does not end in scepticism but proceeds to build up a new world, naturalistic rather than supernaturalistic, empirical rather than rationalistic based upon the clearer understanding of the manner in which the mind of man really functions.",[27] with the real Hume we see emerging from many biographical details. Near the end of The Life of Hume oddly enough, Mossner supplies a wealth of such details. When it was suggested to Hume that it was a waste of money to spend a million (pounds?) on the building of St. Paul's Cathedral, he responded - "Never give an opinion on subjects which you are too young to judge'. St. Paul's, remonstrated Hume, 'as a monument of the religious feeling and sentiment of the country, does it honour, and will endure. We have wasted millions on a single campaign in Flanders, and without any good resulting from it'."[28] And then, as a reminder of the way of life into which Hume had settled in Scotland, Mossner recounts that, "Perhaps it was on a less crowded visit to Inveraray that David Hume, at the express invitation of the parish minister, went to church in the company of Lady Elizabeth Hamilton."[29]

To sum up Hume's philosophical position, Mossner offers the following analysis:-

> "He is also pointing out that his thinking does not end in scepticism but proceeds to build up a new world, naturalistic rather than supernaturalistic, empirical rather than rationalistic based upon the clearer understanding of the manner in which the mind of man really functions."[30]

When deciding on the strength of Mossner's case and the validity of the view which has been expressed in the preceding paragraph, it is as well to bear in mind one of Hume's comments which was made almost as an

26.	Mossner	op. cit.		111
27.	"	"	"	129
28.	"	"	"	545
29.	"	"	"	575
30.	"	"	"	129

aside:- "'Besides, I am as certain as I can be of anything (And I am not such a Sceptic, as you may, perhaps imagine)'..."[31] In Mossner's analysis we are told that Hume's thinking does not end in scepticism, so that his case does not rest on any claim that he is. It is almost certain that Hume would have understood the label 'Sceptic' in two ways. 1. A philosopher who had a low estimate of what the human faculties can take in. Hume's description was - the wretched condition of our faculties.[32] That is why in our understanding of why we make certain decisions on moral questions, we have to be satisfied with superficial answers. It is almost certain that he would have accepted that he was a 'Sceptic' in this sense. 2. Someone who is sceptical about religious beliefs. This is the sense which we find in the passage in which Mossner speaks about Hume's thinking not ending in scepticism, but proceeding to build up a new world, naturalistic rather than supernaturalistic, empirical rather than rationalistic. The rejection of the 'supernaturalistic' is meant, presumably, to indicate a rejection of religious beliefs. This claim is highly questionable. There is every likelihood that Hume was thinking about religious scepticism as well as a sceptical philosophical theory about the way in which we form our beliefs, when he said "(And I am not such a Sceptic, as you may, perhaps imagine)." Some of the passages which we have been considering from The Life of Hume suggest as much.

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Green's and Grose's thorough study of Hume in the 19th. century had the effect of reinforcing one view of Hume - that he was an outrageous, secular sceptic - and this in turn encouraged his secular admirers to claim him for their cause. Christian students of Hume, repelled by by this stereotype of someone who was against religion often accepted the image uncritically, and further perpetuated it; or, shied clear of the study of Hume's views altogether. In this respect Green and Grose have a good deal to answer for. Even if it is accepted that the Dialogues show a different approach to the study of the philosophy of religion to that

31. Mossner op. cit. 259

32. Noxon op. cit. 7

found in The Natural History of Religion, the concluding exchanges in the Dialogues could never support the interpretation which Green and Grose would be bound to place upon them. If the Dialogues are seen as in some sense a final statement of Hume's mature scepticism, it is by no means the case that any of the characters involved in the debate is the clear winner. Having shown himself in his true colours PHILO feels free to condemn religious belief without restraint:-

> "How happens it then, said Philo, if vulgar superstition be so salutary to society, that all history abounds so much with accounts of its pernicious consequences on public affairs? Factions, civil wars, persecutions, subversions of government, oppression, slavery - these are the dismal consequences which always attend its prevalence over the minds of men. If the religious spirit be ever mentioned in any historical narration, we are sure to meet it afterwards with a detail of the miseries which attend it. And no period of time can be happier or more prosperous than those in which it is never regarded or heard of."[33]

In the middle of another longer speech, once again, the force of PHILO's tirade against Theism is undermined:-

> "True religion, I allow, has no such pernicious consequences; but we must treat of religion as it has commonly been found in the world, ..."[34]

The tone with which CLEANTHES answers PHILO is the very opposite, and, as soon as we hear it we are reminded of Hume in his less sceptical moods.

> "Take care, Philo, replied Cleanthes, take care; push not matters too far, allow not your zeal against false religion to undermine your veneration for the true. Forfiet not this principle - the chief, the only great comfort in life and our principal support amids all the attacks of adverse fortune. The most agreeable reflection which it is possible for human imagination to suggest is that of

33. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. by David Hume. Part XII (Ed. N. Pike) New York, Bobb-Merrill Co., 1970.
34. Dialogues by David Hume. (Ed. Pike) op. cit. Part XII

> genuine theism, which represents us as the workmanship of a Being perfectly good, wise, and powerful; who created us for happiness; and who, having implanted in us immeasurable desires of good, will prolong our existence to all eternity, and will transfer us into an infinite variety of scenes, in order to satisfy those desires and render our felicity complete and durable. Next to such a Being himself (if the comparison be allowed), the happiest lot which we can imagine is that of being under his guardianship and protection.[35]

PHILO admits that these appearances are "...most engaging and alluring.." But it happens here, as in the former case, that, with regard to the greater part of mankind, the appearances are deceitful, and that the terrors of religion commonly prevail above its comforts." In the middle of his concluding speech he observes:-

> "To know God, says Seneca, it to worship him. All other worship is indeed absurd, superstitious, and even impious. It degrades him to the low condition of mankind, who are delighted with entreaty, solicitation, presents, and flattery. Yet is this impiety the smallest of which superstition is guilty. Commonly, it depresses the Deity far below the condition of mankind, and represents him as a capricious demon who exercises his power without reason and without humanity! And were that Divine Being disposed to be offended at the vices and follies of silly mortals, who are his own workmanship, ill would it surely fare with the votaries of most popular superstitions. Nor would any of human race merit his favour but a very few, the philosophical theists, who entertain or rather indeed endeavour to entertain suitable notions of his divine perfections. As the only persons entitled to his compassion and indulgence would be the philosophical sceptics, a sect almost equally rare, who, from a natural diffidence of their own capacity, suspend or endeavour to suspend all judgment with regard to such sublime and such extraordinary subjects."[36]

35. Dialogues Hume (Ed. Pike) op. cit. Part XII
36. " " Part XII

The wit and colour in that section of PHILO's speech can only be appreciated against the philosophy of religion debate of Hume's day. In a way, the speech is a point-scoring exercise; but it does serve at least one useful purpose - it serves a reminder that cold, intellectual argument by itself will not necessarily lead to religious belief. Hume accepted more of the 'theistic proofs' than Kant. But PHILO is reminding us in this passage that the acquisition of religious beliefs is more than about scoring points around the 'theistic proofs'.

> "A person, seasoned with a just sense of the imperfections of natural reason, will fly to revealed truth with the greatest avidity; while the haughty dogmatist, persuaded that he can erect a complete system of theology by the mere help of philosophy, disdains any further aid and rejects his adventitious instructor. To be a philosophical sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian - a proposition which I would willingly recommend to the attention of Pamphilus; and I hope Cleanthes will forgive me for interposing so far in the education and instruction of his pupil."
> 37

What sense are we to make of PHILO's claim, that, 'to be a philosophical sceptic is, in a man of letters, the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian'? Is PHILO suggesting that philosophical scepticism is a surer way for a man of letters to become a Christian than the haughty dogmatism of some versions of philosophical Theism? The question is, would any atheistic sceptic be very interested in how to become a 'sound, believing Christian'? That, surely, would be ruled out by his philosophical presuppositions? So that there is something strange about PHILO's scepticism. It is a scepticism which takes strong objection to the arguments which are used in the defence of Deism; is much less forceful in its rejection of the arguments which are used to defend

37. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. by David Hume, Edited and with commentary by, Nelson Pike. Published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company, inc., in 1970.

philosophical Theism, although is still suspicious about arguments which are used to defend religious beliefs of any kind; and finally ends up claiming that philosophical scepticism is 'the first and most essential step towards being a sound, believing Christian' ! Even accepting that PHILO was in some places speaking for Hume, the scepticism we are left with hardly lives up to what Green and Grose were claiming about it. But was PHILO speaking for Hume? This is how the Dialogues are concluded:-

> "Cleanthes and Philo pursued not this conversation much further; and as nothing ever made greater impression on me than all the reasonings of that day, so I confess that, upon a serious review of the whole, I cannot but think that Philo's principles are more probable than Demea's, but that those of Cleanthes approach still nearer to the truth."[38]

What are we to make of this closing paragraph? It was argued in an earlier passage in which the arguments used in the Dialogues were examined, that the structure of the arguments was all-important. It was said that Hume was closer to this speaker than to that speaker. That is the kind of analysis which Hume himself provides us with in this crucial paragraph. "...I cannot but think that Philo's principles are more probable than Demea's, but that those of Cleanthes approach still nearer to the truth." Some have suggested that Hume was not sincere when he added this summary, and that the discerning reader would be able to gather from reading the Dialogues as a whole where his true sympathies lay. That interpretation not only destroys the literary unity of this work, but does much to undermine the writer's integrity. In what is a complete literary masterpiece, such an aberration is hard to explain, if only for the reason that Hume spent so long perfecting it and was so specific about how it should be published. The idea that it was somehow an after-thought or an accident, is simply not tenable. The suggestion that he had to add something like it

38. Dialogues Hume (Ed. Pike) op. cit. Part XII

in order to make his work acceptable in what was still a fairly conservative, Christian country, runs into the same difficulty, because that would still represent a serious mutilation of the work he intended to write. What would he have gained? The special measures which he took to ensure eventual, unabridged publication would surely have made it unnecessary to conceal what those closest to him knew to be his true opinions. The truth would have come out sooner or later. The whole point of handling the question of the publication of the Dialogues in the way in which Hume stipulated, was that he would be able to speak his mind frankly. This he had been prevented from doing on various occasions early on in his career. This was one way of putting that right. The Dialogues were equally important to Hume, the man-of-letters, because they represented a literary triumph. They are designed to be read and appreciated at various levels. Someone, for example, who has no interest in the philosophy of religion debates can still appreciate this work as superb literature. Another feature which was of outstanding importance to Hume the classicist, was the employment of the form of dialogue. As he says himself in the letter from Pamphilus to Hermippus, "It has been remarked, my Hermippus, that, though the ancient philosophers conveyed most of their instruction in the form of dialogue, this method of composition has been little practised in later ages..."[39] To conduct this philosophical debate using the ancient form of dialogue, represented an enormous triumph for Hume. This showed a spark of originality. All this serves to underline the argument that he would not have allowed himself too many liberties in a work which mattered to him so very much.

The need to question Hume's sincerity in the final paragraph is felt most by those who have a philosophical axe to grind. For them, if PHILO could be shown to speak clearly and unambigiously for the mature Hume, then their claims about the sceptical nature of his philosophical position would be established, and they could safely build on the secular found-

39. Dialogues Hume (Ed. Pike:Pamphilus to Hermippus).

which he had laid. It is far from certain that they would be safe in doing this. What was Hume trying to do through the Dialogues? It can safely be accepted that he was attempting a number of things, the last of which may have been the settling of some abstruse point in the philosophy of religion debate.

They need to be interpreted in several different ways. When that is done, then, the all-important, intense conclusion about the final paragraph will be seen to be largely irrelevant. The question raised about this paragraph is a serious one, but it is one about which Hume himself may have been unconcerned. Not to have noticed this is to have mis-read the Dialogues.

In the Introduction a list was made of the different ways in which Humean philosophy has been interpreted: some see the Classical thinker, others the Intuitionist, and another group the Newtonian philosopher. In a postscript to the edition of the Dialogues which he edited with a commentary, Nelson Pike raises another interpretation. "There is a clear sense," he writes, "...in which Berkeley was the hero of Hume's first major philosophical work, A Treatise of Human Nature."[40] In this postscript in which he discusses the question of whether or not we should be looking for a single hero among the personae represented in the Dialogues, he argues that it may be Berkeley who turns out to be the hero of Hume's last major philosophical work. Pike claims that Philo seems to speak for Hume in most places. Cleanthes he sees as shifting his position from the 'experimental theism' of Dialogue II, to the position marked out by Berkeley in part IV of the Alcephron. If Cleanthes is taken as representing 'experimental theism' then we should regard him as the loser; but, if we should judge him by the Berkeley-like theist of the Dialogue III section, then Cleanthes and Philo should be seen to share the honours in the work as a whole. And so, who wins the argument? Pike suggests - "Perhaps the winner (if there is one) is Bishop Berkley. Regardless of whether or not it is possible to agree

40. Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. by David Hume, Edited and with commentary by, Nelson Pike. London, Bobbs-Merrill Company, inc., in 1970. 238

with that view, Pike does at least make it clear how unsafe it is to conclude as Professor Smith did that Philo is the winner.

There can be no doubt that Green and Grose made a significant contribution to our modern understanding of Hume. Their study of his voluminous output was thorough and authoritative. Many of their criticisms of Hume's shortcomings were perceptive. All the same their work was biased. It was structured to lead to lead finally to an unfavourable and damning conclusion. Their aim was to divert attention away from what they imagined to be a hopelessly flawed position, to their own, which would support religious belief much better. What they achieved in fact was to make it much more difficult to examine the role which is played by religious belief in Hume's system. A full study of Hume's works reveals that he left the door open to the need for religious beliefs. That door is slightly open rather than tight shut. An attempt has been made to show how that can be demonstrated by approaching his upbringing, training and writings from a different and in many respects more natural angle to that taken by Green and Grose. This approach is also a corrective to many other recent secular interpretations.

What cannot be doubted is that Hume remained an Intuitionist through all the changes of an eventful career. During all this time he remained a member of the Church of Scotland. It is also possible to be quite specific about the Intuitionism to which he adhered. This was not exactly the Deistic Intuitionism of Shaftesbury, nor was it the Theistic Intuitionism of Hutcheson. We have seen that at first he attempted to create a new Intuitionism which was secular. For a while he persevered with this attempt. It was never a complete success. Hume appreciated this better than anyone else. Intuitionism somehow presupposed a religious view of life. It depended on that. Its main claims were without foundation if there was not something unique about human intuitions. Intuitionism was the rock on which all purely secular views of man foundered! That had to

be true of Hume's Intuitionism as well. This is what Green and Grose failed to see. Hume defended his his ethical theory on the basis of Intuitionism! Secularists have built on what they imagine to have been Hume's secular Intuitionism without asking if there is such an Intuitionism. It is very doubtful if Hume was finally satisfied that there is. That is why he must be regarded as not only a great British philosopher, but as a great Intuitionist, in the tradition of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

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page

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Recent Studies.

A number of recent studies on Hume's philosophy of religion provide evidence of a growing interest in the nature of his religious beliefs. In Hume's Philosophy of Religion J.C.A. Gaskin has undertaken a thorough study of Hume and religious belief. Kenneth R. Merrill of the University of Oklahoma and Donald G. Wester of Oklahoma Baptist Univ. wrote an article - 'Hume on the Relation of Religion to Morality' in 1980, which was published in the Journal of Religion No. 160. In 1983 The Philosophical Quarterly published an article entitled 'Natural Belief and Religious Belief in Hume's Philosophy In all these studies the view taken is that the religious element in Hume's work has not been investigated with sufficient sensitivity.

Gaskin raises two questions of importance in relation to that claim. The first is the view that Hume in some sense anticipated the principle of natural selection.[1] We do find in the Dialogues one passage which fits the modern account of how natural selection operates in the animal world:-

> "The stronger prey upon the weaker, and keep them in perpetual terror and anxiety. The weaker too, in their turn, often prey upon the stronger, and vex and molest them without relaxation. Consider that innumerable race of insects, which either are bred on the body of each animal, or flying about infix their stings in him. These insects have others still less than themselves, which torment them. And thus on each hand, before and behind, above and below, every animal is surrounded with enemies, which incessantly seek his misery and destruction."[2]

This has been interpreted as a double-pronged attack on Theism. A modern secular biologist might find in that passage a striking account of what appears to take place in Nature, by a host of random processes. There is little evidence here to show the guiding hand of a Christian Creator. This objection is sharpened still further in another passage found in the Dialogues

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1. Hume's Philosophy of Religion. Houndmills, Macmillan 1988, by JCA Gaskin. 44
2. Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 311

> "The whole presents nothing but the idea of blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children! "[3]

Although few scientists today would question the process of natural selection, as seen in the changes which have taken place in a number of species over a long period of time, it should not be taken for granted that the theory of natural selection is without any difficulties. Firstly, it not easy to see how natural selection can explain all the changes that have taken place in plants and animals. That it can account for many changes is now beyond dispute. It is not yet clear that it can account for all of them. Secondly, the archaeological record does not yet provide a clear picture of natural selection having taken place. It is argued that this is because the early life forms had soft bodies which have not been preserved in the fossil record. Nevertheless, while the record remains incomplete the theory of natural selection lacks the support of conclusive evidence, and the lack of such evidence has not been without its problems before in the field of natural history. Thirdly, there are barriers in nature which make it impossible for us to assume that, given sufficient time, natural selection could account for all the changes which we see in living organisms. Time is one such barrier. The timing of the changes is vital to the theory of natural selection. The changes must fit in with the timing laid down in the archaeological record. It would be wrong to claim that all the evidence fits in neatly with the theory of natural selection. That qualification has to be entered before we can safely go on to assess the role which an early version of the natural selection theory may have played in Hume's view of the natural world.

It was noticed earlier that it was Newton's revolutionary understanding of 'causation' that challenged fundamentally the Theistic Cosmological argument. Most of all it eliminated the need for an 'uncaused, first cause'. If that was

3. Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 325

indeed the case, then, the need for a guiding hand in the story of creation became unnecessary. The new understanding of causation could explain everything. Newton's reaction to this discovery was not to conclude that there was now no need to believe in a Creator, but rather to insist that God had put in place those forces through which the created order has come into being. It was the constitution of the natural order which so impressed Newton that he found in it the order which led to belief in the Creator. Hume was well aware of all this. He knew precisely where Newton stood on all these questions, and we can in fact find Newton's arguments in Hume's works. There is an exact parallel between Newton's understanding of the principle of causation and the modern understanding of natural selection. The implications for the Theistic view of God as the 'uncaused, first cause' are exactly the same. Natural selection may be the mechanism by which life has developed, but what about the forces in nature behind that mechanism? Are they good or bad; do they point to belief in a Creator or away from it? Newton believed that they are good and that they do, therefore, point to the workings of a good and wise Creator, so that these new discoveries did not lead necessarily into scepticism or atheism. So that the suggestion that Hume may have anticipated the theory of natural selection does not take us any further forward in our understanding of how it may have affected his philosophy of religion. The main issues are already there in his handling of Newton.

It has to be admitted that we find in Hume's writings the view that 'Nature is blind'[4] which can be taken to mean that it is at best morally neutral, and, at worst, morally evil. This latter view is similar to that taken by the Gnostics who believed that the Creation was inherently evil. Equally, Hume gives full weight to the counter-argument:-

> "Your representations are exaggerated: Your melancholly views most fictitious: Your inferences contrary to fact and experience. Health is more common than sickness: pleasure than pain: Happiness than misery. And for one vexation, which we meet with, we attain

4. Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit. 329

upon computation, a hundred enjoyments."

The other major question which is raised by Gaskin is that, if Hume did have some religion left in him, he was more likely to have favoured Deism than Theism. Gaskin's view is not without evidence, because; (a) his Intuitionism can be traced to Shaftesbury who had Deistic leanings; (b) Newton, who had a profound influence on Hume, was, in the eyes of some, opening the door to Deism; and, (c) Deism was becoming fashionable in Hume's day, because it had considerable rational appeal to those who had grown tired of the complex deity found in Theism; (d) It has been argued that the giving of the last word to Cleanthes is not without significance, and, althought it may be a mistake to say dogmatically that any of the characters in the Dialogues holds consistently to one view, on page 113 of the thesis it is argued that Cleanthes appears to be a Deist.

However, the evidence against this view is strong. (a) Hume's own specific rejection of Deism:- "I am no Deist..."[5] (b) In his account of how our beliefs are formed, Hume, along with several other philosophers of his day believed that the role of education is crucial. He did not say that it is impossible to change the beliefs which one has been taught through education in childhood, but he did believe that it difficult, especially when the new beliefs which one is invited to accept are not obviously more credible. Taking his works as a whole, he shows no great enthusiasm for Deism, whereas he appears to approve what he refers to as "...true Theism."[6] As he had a Presbyterian background his natural leaning would have been towards Theism. (c) He chose in later life to settle in Edinburgh, still a Presbyterian stronghold, and it was in Edinburgh that he made friends among the Ministers of the Church of Scotland.*

In asking the question - 'was Hume an attenuated Deist'? Gaskin has asked a valid question, but the right answer may be that he was an 'attenuated Theist'.

* See also p.28

5. Gaskin (1988 edition) op. cit. 245

6. Natural History of Religion, by D. Hume, London, Oxford at the Clarendon Press. 1976. 25

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In view of the fact that Scotland cannot claim a place among the world's ancient civilizations, the development of a movement which became known as the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th. century, deserves close study. In the thesis it has been argued that the Reformation played a major role in creating the intellectual climate for this movement (p. 7 f.) It has to be admitted that a great flowering of the intellect took place in Italy during the 15th. century Renaissance, and it too embraced the Arts and Sciences in a way which transformed the outlook of that age, but, as is noted on page 14, the pioneering of new ideas in the sciences met with resistance from the Roman Catholic church, so that they were accepted with difficulty. By the time the Scottish Enlightenment took place the scientific method was no longer under suspicion, paving the way for the outstandingly successful Scottish scientists and inventors of the Industrial Revolution. A close relationship between the Reformation and the Scottish Enlightenment can further be demontrated, because the Scottish Reformers like Knox had direct contact with the Continental leaders of the Reform, such as Calvin, whose humanistic credentials cannot be questioned. In Calvin (London, Collins 1963) Francois Wendel wrote:-

> "One could cite numerous instances of this persistence of humanistic tendencies. Whatever has since been said of it, Calvin retained the notion of natural law that he had acquired from the Stoics, and did no more than accommodate it to Christian principles. Though he defended himself, with good reason, against those who accused him of having brought the Stoic notion of fate into his doctrine of predestination, we have been able to discover a whole series of passages, even in the Institutes, which are manifestly inspired by texts of Erasmus."(p.33)

And,

> "Before his conversion he took humanism to be the end in itself; after that event it was no more than a means; and as has been said of him, no less correctly than tersely, 'he employs humanism to combat humanism'.

> He continues to admire the philosophers of antiquity, he still respects Erasmus and his disciples, and all his life he will never cease to admire and make use of their labours and writings: but he will always take care never to go too far with them; he will always point out that it is better 'not to follow the philosophers farther than is profitable'." (p. 44)

It was not uncommon for the Reformers to denounce superstition, in terms almost as scathing as we find in the Works of Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Hume. In the Works of John Knox VOL 4, Edinburgh, Johnstone and Hunter MDCCCLV page 162 we see superstition condemned. Hume was by no means isolated in highlighting the evil influence of superstition in some religions: similar condemnations had come from religious leaders from the time of the Reformation. It was argued on page 7 of the thesis, that, as English Puritanism was also sometimes reactionary in its response to the scientific method, Knox's contact with Calvin had enabled the educationists of the Scottish Reformation to raise academic standards to a level which was fully on a par with the best in Europe. By Hume's day the influence of English Puritanism within Scottish Presbyterianism had increased considerably, and there is good reason for believing that he reacted strongly against it. It had little to offer him as he pursued his own more philosophically orientated studies. But the legacy of the early Scottish Reformers meant that the academic climate in which he grew up favoured the enquiries which produced the Scottish Enlightenment.

In Experience and Enlightemnent (Edinburgh University Press 1983) Charles Camic explores in depth the at times strange relationship between Scottish Calvinism and the new ideas of the Enlightenment. Scottish Calvinism has earned for itself the reputation of being extremely conservative theologically, and it cannot be disputed that it has produced churchmen with extreme tendencies; and yet, as we go back to Knox, Melville and Henderson, we are brought face-to-face with the fact that they introduced to Scotland the novel

approaches which prepared the way for the Scottish Enlightenment. Camic quotes Talcott Parsons:- " ' The Reformation was the culmination ... of the trend of social and cultural change away from the medieval system and towards modernity'." (p.1) "The Reformation" Camic argues "was indeed the watershed in the emergence of modern society and culture." (p.2) He goes on to complain of the "...neglected role of the Enlightenment in the formation of various attitudes, values, viewpoints, and orientations that are now regarded as integral features of modern culture." (p.4) He rightly insists that "Scottish Calvinist culture was not monochromatic." (p.30) Such was the exposure of the Scottish academic community to the latest European scholarship, argues Camic, that "...there were few major philosophical, legal or scientific currents that had left Scotland untouched by the 1730's." (p. 35)

But this was not at the expense of confessional roots. Camic claims:- "The Calvinist orientation of dependency was also preserved in the writings of the most avant-garde early eighteenth-century Scottish philosophers. Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729) was, for example, a very generous proponent of the philosophies of Grotious and Pufendorf, Leibniz and Descartes, Locke and Newton. Through them all, however, he remained 'wrapt in ...Calvinism'." (Rae 1895, p. 12) (p. 37) "Andrew Baxter (1686-1750) was of a similar ilk. Having immersed himself in Leibniz, Clarke, Locke, and Newton, he then used these up-to-date sources to establish: 'the necessity of incessant Providence ... the ceaseless activity of the Divine cause'. (Laurie 1902, pp. 36,39)." (p. 37) Francis Hutcheson, Camic claims "...accepted the most essential premises of Calvinism." (p. 38)

Moving on to the scholars of the Scottish Enlightenment, Camic puts Adam Ferguson first, Hume second, John Millar third, William Robertson fourth and Adam Smith fifth.

> "... the cultural change represented by the term Enlightenment appeared in the writings or cultural productions of five men:

> Adam Ferguson (1723 - 1816), a crusty, moralistic highlander who occupied the chair of pneumatics and moral philosophy at the University of Edinburgh; David Hume (1711 - 76), the cheerful and controversial skeptical philosopher who was his age's most versatile, cosmopolitan, and accomplished man-of-letters; John Millar (1735 - 1801), a wide-ranging historian, outspoken political commentator, and long-time professor of civil law at Glasgow University; William Rober tson (1721 - 93), a reserved Presbyterian minister and eloquent modern historian, who was principal of Edinburgh University during its golden age; and Adam Smith (1723 - 90), a beloved Glasgow professor of moral philosophy, and an absentminded commissioner of Scottish Customs and salt duties, and a premier student of rhetoric, psychology, jurisprudence, and political economy." "... although Ferguson, Hume, Millar, Robertson and Smith knew one another and were for the most part bound together by ties of friendship, they neither formed a cohesive group nor typically regarded themselves as united in a common cultural enterprise." (p. 48)

The picture which Camic conveys to us in these paragraphs is that of a single, informal Scottish academic establishment, which drew equally on the Calvinism of Knox, Melville and Henderson, as well as on the humanism of the Enlightenment.

> "The belief that humans and their world are absolutely dependent on God, was, as Weber taught, anything but incompatible with the 'spirit of enterprise'. Indeed the two merged in the lives of many devout Calvinists, and the Scottish improvers were frequently men of this breed, even as they were unwitting allies of the Scottish Enlightenment." (p.86)

> "The Enlightement found a second set of supporters in the Moderates, the group of ministers generally associated with the Moderate party of the Church of Scotland." (p. 87)

Camic argues that, during the mid-eighteenth century, the Moderates were

attempting to bring Calvinism up-to-date, "... by breaking down 'the rigidity of the old Calvinist categories' and adjusting them to the new intellectual developments of the age (Clark 1970 p. 205; see also Clark 1964, p, 241)." (p. 87) Following Clark's interpretation Camic illustrates that claim by stating that the Moderates revised the traditional view of the effects of the fall, presented a more promising view of human capabilities, and, above all, developed an extensive commitment to universalism. "The influential Moderate divinity professor at Glasgow, William Zeeshman, for example, asserted that 'whenever there was any one found, even in the Heathen world ... earnestly panting after light and purity, that god never did deny his grace to such a person'." (p. 87)

Camic goes further. He claims that, not only did the Moderates "... endorse the bulk of the Westminster Confession..." but, "... they continually affirmed the Calvinist orientation of dependency and the theological postulates that accompanied it." (p. 88) Following this interpretation, the Moderates did not set Calvinism and Enlightenment thought against one another, but felt that they could co-exist side-by-side, if a little uneasily at times:-

> "If not as pessimistic about human nature as their ancestors, and their Evangelical contemporaries, these liberal minsters still held that 'the newborn infant' begins life in 'guilt and error', and thereafter continues in a state of 'ignorance, weakness, guilt, and danger', the victim of 'irregular appetites and passions'. 'Above this sorry creature the Moderates constantly placed 'that great being who alone can bestow eternal happiness' (Gerald 1761 p. 325) Time and again they recounted 'all his glorious perfections: his power and wisdom, his holiness, his justice, his truth' (Scotland p. 72). This truth, they insisted against the Enlightenment, was not to be found in the 'airy schemes of philosophy', those 'false and artificial remedies' that plunge mankind 'into an unfathomable

> abyss of misery and despair' (Sommerville c. 1776, p. 103; see also Leechman 1758, p. 224). The word of God, rather, was the key. For the Moderates, the Bible ever remained 'the rule of faith and life'...." (p. 88)

It is appropriate to comment that Hume's closest associates when he settled in Edinburgh were the Moderate Ministers of the Church of Scotland, and the sympathy which it was claimed in the thesis he felt for this synthesis of Calvinist and Enlightenment themes, seems only natural in the light of that fact. Just as (or so it has been argued in the thesis) Hume was never enthusiastic about the neo-Deistic belief in the innocency of human nature, as witnessed to in the character of 'perfectly brought up children', so too the Moderates believed that the newborn infant begins life in guilt and error.

Camic makes a valid claim for the influence of this combination of Calvinist and Enlightenment ideas when he writes:-

> "For most of the period from the Reformation to the early eighteenth century, Scotland's five universities, whatever their other differences, gave those who did attend an education that was highly traditional in both content and form. Above and beyond Calvinst verities, the typical Arts curriculum of the age consisted of a year of Greek and a year of each of three branches - logic and rhetoric, moral philosophy, & natural philosophy - of an expurgated Aristotelian philosophy that absorbed modern intellectual developments very slowly. " (p. 165)

(as)

> "...specialist professors acquired expertise in their various subjects, they rapidly abandoned the antiquated Aristotelianism, insipid dictations, and mechanical assignments of the regents in favour of stimulating lectures on the novel philosophical developments of the age and thought-provoking oral and written exercises." (p. 174)

In The Mind of Man and the Works of God (Clarendon, Oxford 1987) Edward Craig explores that aspect of human nature which is central to Hume's Intuitionism, because it deals with the foundation of our moral beliefs.

On page 71 we find a discussion of a passage quoted from the Treatise:-

> " '... virtue is nothing but a conformity to reason; that there are eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things, which are the same to every rational being that considers them; and that the immutable measures of right and wrong impose an obligation, not only on human creatures, but also on the Deity himself...' " (ed. Selby- Bigge 2nd. Ed. revised by P.H. Midditch, Oxford 1978; Bk III Pt. I Sec. I p. 456).

Craig comments:- "God and man are alike in point of their reason, and consequently also in point of their morality. Hume then goes on, admittedly, to shelve the theological aspect of the question and simply argue that human reason will not by itself generate human morality." This is precisely the question which is raised in the thesis (p. 77 f.) and as proof that he at least reflected on it, Craig quotes part of a speech made by Demea in the Dialogues:- " ' I shall be so free... as to tell you, that from the beginning, I could not approve of your conclusion concerning the similarity of the Deity to men...' ". (Dialogues ed. N.K. Smith, Nelson 1947 - now Bobbs-Merrill, P. 143 Part II). The view which Shaftesbury and Hutcheson would doubtless have supported is summed by Craig as follows:- "... the possession of reason is one of the main links between the human and the divine natures. Reason in human beings is to be that same faculty which is pre-eminently found in God. Its operation in man may be sluggish and limited in scope, but still it is the divine spark present in us,..." (p. 89)

Finally, in Studies in the Philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, EDITED BY M.A. Stuart, (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1990) Kund Haakonssen, in an article entitled 'Natural Law and Moral Realism: the Scottish Synthesis' raises again the question of the foundation of moral beliefs, this time as dealt with by Pufendorf. "If the moral realm is imposed by God's will in the form of natural law, then this will can be authoritative for one of two reasons: either because it is backed by a superior power, or because it

it has some natural force." (p. 68)

Haakonssen goes on to claim:- "... Hutcheson is quite prepared to acknowledge that when men act in accordance with Pufendorf's basic law of nature, their behaviour appears moral. The good produced is however, a natural and not a moral good as long as the obligation to this pattern of behaviour is prudential rather than moral." (p. 70) He goes on to add - "In the light of this it is hardly surprising that law-based ethics is seen invariably egoistic by Hutcheson."

On p. 203 the thesis concludes with the claim that Hume may never have been satisfied that a fully secular Intuitionism is possible. Shaftesbury and Hutcheson were at times a bit vague about how the constitution of the Creation and the moral character of the Creator influence us in the way we make moral choices, but they were sure that a connection of some kind does exist. In order to avoid having to defend a moral system based on a secular Intuitionism, Hume tagged along with Shaftesbury and Hutcheson, accepting many of their conclusions, but never fully spelling out how they were arrived at.

Thus Scottish society found it possible to accommodate two very different movements, which, together contributed greatly to the creation of the modern nation. There was a certain amount of convergence, such as in opposition to superstition, and the two movements sought peaceful co-existence rather than serious conflict. For Hume opposition to superstition included the questioning of the whole foundation to claims about miracles; whereas conservative Calvinists would have retained genuine miracles while at the same time rejecting superstition. Hume was very much part of this situation. In theory he should have been a complete outcast, whereas in practice he was listened to attentively as one of the leaders of the Scottish Enlightenment.

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		page
1.	Hume's Philosophy of Religion. Houndmills, Macmillan 1988, by JCA Gaskin.	44
2.	Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit.	311
3.	Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit.	325
4.	Dialogues by D. Hume (Ed. MacIntyre) op. cit.	329
5.	Gaskin (1988 edition) op. cit.	245
6.	Natural History of Religion. by D. Hume, London, Oxford at the Clarendon Press. 1976.	25

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Chapter Summaries.

Introduction.

Humean philosophy has been defined in the following ways. (a) A system based on the classical influence of Cicero. (b) An attempt to offer a parallel in moral philosophy to Sir Isaac Newton's contribution to the physical sciences. (c) Intuitionism in the Shaftesbury/Hutcheson tradition.

If we consider his work as a whole, it is difficult to select one of Hume's works and claim that it represents a definitive, final position. The approach which is taken in this study is that of following the development of Hume's thinking, from his early education until the completion of all his major works. When this approach is followed it becomes obvious that the secular interpretation of Humean philosophy which has gained widespread acceptance is not always convincing. He in fact wrote a fairly conservative work on Natural Religion. Moreover, his Intuitionism makes little sense without the religious foundation which Shaftesbury and Hutcheson had taken for granted. He did make a significant contribution to the philosophical study of psychology.

Chapter 1.

(Hume's Educational Background)

It is important to see Hume as working in an educational tradition. Scottish humanistic, Reformed. His family was Presbyterian: the young Hume would have received a good Christian training. Although not considered an outstandingly bright pupil, he attended Edinburgh University at an early age and soon developed a voracious appetite for scholarly literature. The at times deeply introspective side of his character may well have come from his Presbyterian background.

As his reading widened so the faith of his childhood weakened. His development as an original philosopher began with the discovery of several key works. At an early stage in his career he developed a deep respect for Cicero. Cicero's influence can be found in Hume's

scepticism and his classical methodology. But it was Newton who was setting the world alight with his discoveries in the natural sciences. Hume was fully aware of this. What Newton was saying was turning philosophy upside-down. Newton's account of causation differed fundamentally to that taught by Aristotelian orthodoxy. In view of that, several scholars have been compelled to ask - did Hume aspire to become a 'Newton of the moral sciences'? If so, it did not take him long to see that such an ambition was misconceived fundamentally, because the realm of science and that of moral philosophy have no direct connection. Instead, Hume returned to the Intuitionism of FrancisHutcheson, which accepted human feelings and responses at their face value, without finding it necessary to justify them, or give a rational explanation to account for them. If Cicero was a sceptic, Newton was a Christian and Hutcheson a Presbyterian. There can be no doubt that Hutcheson's Intuitionism was rooted in his Christian faith. Intuitionism had come to Hutcheson from Shaftesbury, who was a member of the Church of England, but open to some Deistic ideas. According to Shaftesbury, human instincts at their noblest are to be trusted.

Hume's New Naturalistic World.

By Hume's day, man himself had become part of the general scientific enquiry. For some, science was being hailed as a new religion. Hume soon came to appreciate that pure science would have little to say on moral questions. In his aim to relate science and ethics to one another, he began with a study of what we can learn about how man makes moral decisions, by studying the workings of the human body. This approach may seem Rationalistic, but Hume was never that for long. He rejcted the concept of the pure objectivity of logical

thinking, in favour of a better understanding of human nature.

If Hume did come to accept the need for a distinction between philosophy and psychology, where did the question of how we form our beliefs fit in? He started with a causal mechanism which would account for the way in which 'ideas' are transformed into 'beliefs'. There is in Hume a strong association between 'memory' and 'beliefs'. This was not a justification of our ultimate beliefs, but an attempt to trace them to their source in our human nature. If we are to go beyond such a basic, technical definition of 'beliefs' to consider the raw materials out of which they are made, of what use is this first definition?

1. Divine Revelation. Hume would have questioned the claim that this is a valid source of information, but not rejected it completely. To begin with, the 'causal theory of perception' is not a question on which Hume and the Theist would have parted company. Hume would have been ready to concede that it is possible to contemplate God's existence. We can have an idea of such a being. But, beliefs belonging to this category come before 'beliefs proper'. In his system we progress from 'images' to 'ideas' to 'beliefs'. How are we to judge between ideas? Hume had no clear answer, and this is what lay at the heart of his scepticism. His scepticism was more than the philosophical scepticism of Cicero. It had to do with the way in which beliefs are formed in the mind. Gradually he began to understand that we need an account which takes in the whole of life: what we experience and reflect upon, as well as how we form our beliefs with our brain.

Theologically, this problem has been understood in, for example, the difficulty of relating man's finitude to God's infinity: a difficulty which the Christian would claim has been solved in the Incarnation.

2. Education. Eventually Hume turned his attention away from trying to discover 'how we can explain the formation of our beliefs from the workings of the mind', to a more elementary explanation - education. Education can be seen to play a crucial role in the way in which we form our beliefs. If Hume was eager to show that this view was valid for most people, then we are entitled to ask how much the role of his Presbyterian upbringing played in the formation of his own views? Is this influence detectable, for example, in his philosophical conclusions? It can certainly be argued that his acceptance of a version of Frances Hutcheson's Intuitionism was evidence of a Christian influence.

3. Pleasure and Pain. Working from the 'sensitive' side of human nature, Hume accepted from Locke the view that the formation of our beliefs is considerably influenced by the emotions of pleasure and pain.

4. Reason.

5. Association.

6. Recapitulation.

In addition to Hume's account of the way in which our beliefs are formed and the Christian inferences which we can read into it; his anthropological model as well was much more the product of his Christian background than of the Enlightenment. It did contain several Enlightenment emphases, but there were important Christian elements in it.

The Presuppositions Behind Hume's Model.

It could be argued that two major presuppositions were the product of his Christian background. (a) An Intuitionism which held to a religious view of man. (b) The presence of something akin to Kant's understanding of moral obligation. Hume can be pinned down as to what he meant by those qualities which we must praise and those which are to be condemned. In support of the former, he would give two reasons:- (a) their antiquity; and, (b) their universality.

Hutcheson's Intuitionism and Hume's.

There was a polarisation in the 18th. century between Rationalism and Intuitionism. Rationalism placed the emphasis on the mind. Intuitionism on feelings. Francis Hutcheson held to a spiritual Intuitionism which had been developed in a Theistic tradition. Shaftesbury had been the moving spirit in this camp. In his case, he was much more open to Deism than were the philosophers who followed the traditional approach. Some of them were Rationalists, although a secular Rationalism was gaining ground on the Continent. Hume had been exposed to this secular Rationalism at an early period in his career. But he never became a part of this movement, and that is of great importance to the present interpretation. He could not accept that men are guided solely by reason.

Laird reminds us that Hume's Intuitionism differed from Hutcheson's because it made a serious attempt to accommodate the new, scientific understanding of human nature. Laird also shows how much Shaftesbury had influenced Hutcheson. This Intuitionism was optimistic about human nature. Both Shaftesbury and Hutcheson held that the desire for the public good of all is deep-seated in the human breast. From Cicero Hume derived the principle that no action can be virtuous unless it proceeds from a virtuous motive.

At first sight we are confronted with two Intuitionisms - Hutcheson's spiritual and Hume's secular. Closer study, however, will reveal that the attempt to keep them separate was never entirely successful. Hume may well have entertained the hope that they could be separated, but there is much to suggest that he was disappointed in this. In his account of how we form our beliefs, he begins with 'perceptions', then progresses to 'ideas', and finally arrives at 'beliefs'. That is the mechanism by which he thought beliefs are formed. And yet we still have to go on to explain moral obligation.

In Hutcheson the explanation was along the following lines:- 'Man is a moral being because he is the bearer of the divine image'. Hume had attempted to reduce that to:- 'Man is morally aware'. Eventually, he came to the conclusion that, while it is possible to say:- 'Man is aware', a major jump has to be taken to go on to say:- 'Man is morally aware'. This is the transition which he sought to address in his exposure of the Naturalistic Fallacy.

How then did he address this formidable problem. He chose the route to which Berkeley in particular objected, which was to protest that our faculties are so defe ctive that we cannot give an answer. He in fact evaded the issue. If he was unable to explain why man is morally aware, what then was the value of his secular Intuitionism? That is a key question in this examination of the differences and similarities between Hutcheson's and Hume's Intuitionisms. If the belief in an all-wise, all-just, and all-merciful God was so important to Shaftesbury and then Hutcheson in their understanding of Virtue, is it reasonable to suggest that Hume could dispense with it? The bulk of the material found in Hume's Enquiry can be traced to the writings of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

Hume's Philosophy of Religion.

To those who claim that Hume had no philosophy of religion worth mentioning, his The Natural History of Religion. presents something of an embarrassment, because in this volume we find historical depth as well as systematic precision. It shows that Hume thought a good deal about the issues raised by the philosophy of religion debate. The philosophy of religion which we find outlined in this Volume is of a Theistic rather than Deistic complexion.

It was while he was writing The Natural History of Religion. that he conceived the outline of the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Here the standpoint is rather different. They have been used to demonstrate that the older Hume was as sceptical about religious questions, as the the younger, controversial Hume. A close reading of the Dialogues will make clear that very great care has to be taken before drawing hard-and -fast conclusions from them, in favour or against religious beliefs.

In general, it is true to say that Hume leant much more in favour of Theism than Deism. This is of significance because various debates between the Theists and the Deists were raging at this time. The Theists argued for an infinite deity, who, because of his transcendence, could only be partly known. The Deists proposed a finite deity, whose attributes could be evaluated rationally. Hume was familiar with the attack on infinity which turned several Christian thinkers of standing to the Deistic camp. At times he himself employed the Deistic objection to the use of any 'perception' which was beyond human understanding. He conceded that our mind can never attain an adequate conception of infinity. And yet, in The Natural History of Religion. we find him defending what appears to be a Theistic theological structure. On several occasions he insisted that if he was to be called anything, he should be called a Theist.

The Theistic 'proofs'.

If Hume was then in any sense a Theist, what was his attitude to the Theistic 'proofs'?

a. The Cosmological argument. Hume was aware of the changes which Newtonian cosmology had imposed on the Aristotelian understanding of a first, uncaused cause. Newtonian physics was demonstrating that it is not motion but change of motion which has to be accounted for. Because of this there is no 'first cause'. This did not eliminate the need for the major Fiats of creation; some scholars having even read into Hume's position a need for the Big Bang theory. Instead, Newtonian physics helped to demonstrate better the principle of causation through which the Fiats came about.

b. The Ontological argument. Hume would have had little difficulty in agreeing that it is possible to conceive of a being, 'greater than which cannot be believed not to exist'. The question which he then wanted to ask was - 'what status should be given to such a conception'? Can we demonstrate that such a being exists? His answer would have been that it is not possible to demonstrate empirically such a conception, and, therefore, it cannot have the status of conceptions of concrete objects. But even on this question, Hume's attempt to distinguish between these two types of conception was not completely successful, because some conceptions do not fall neatly into either of the two categories. The main contribution which the Ontological argument makes is to elucidate the Theistic conception of God.

c. The Teleological argument. The argument from design was breaking on the scientific world of Hume's day in a fresh and compelling way, because of what was being discovered about planetary motion and the law of gravity. There can be little doubt that Hume, out of deference to Newton's exposition of the argument from design, nearly always wrote about it as one ready to be convinced by it.

Hume also gave expression to the counter-arguments. In the Dialogues for example, PHILO advances a frontal attack on the idea that the universe displays the handiwork of an all-good, all-wise, all-powerful Creator. But there are strong reasons for not accepting the view that PHILO always spoke for Hume.

d. The Moral argument. Hume would have been aware that Kant held to the view that the Moral argument was the correct starting-point for natural theology. Many have assumed that Kant's use of the Moral argument presupposed a divine law-giver and judge, who gives force to the moral imperatives.

For scholars who found weaknesses in the other Theistic 'proofs', Kant's approach held several attractions. The Moral argument was not susceptible to the implications of new scientific insights. And yet, Kant's preoccupation with one argument was tending to undermine all the arguments. This can be illustrated from Hume's Dialogues where we find PHILO objecting to the Teleological and Moral arguments together, at the same time. By dealing with the argument from Design he was able to demonstrate the weaknesses of the Moral argument as well.

If it is accepted that Hume's view of life was optimistic - that this is the best of all possible worlds - then it seems reasonable to conclude that he would have agreed with much of what Kant was saying about the Moral argument.

e. The Ethnological argument. The argument that the presence of a religious belief in every branch of the human race proves the existence of God, is similar to the Kantian interpretation of the Moral argument. It argues from man's spiritual constitution, to a belief in a transcendent, higher power. Does this universal belief prove that there is a God? In Hume's day travel was bringing to light the number and variety of religions which are to be found in different parts of the world. But this evidence was confusing, because it

could not be used to demonstrate that it was a revelation which the one, true God had made of Himself. Even here Hume appears to offer a solution, because he suggests that mankind may be moving to a closer understanding of a perfect being, who bestowed order on the frame of nature.

Different Approaches to Hume.

If Hume's secular Intuitionism met with a mixed response in his own day, in the 20th. Century it has generated much interest. It was during the 19th. Century that a group of British moral philosophers decided to build afresh on Hume's foundation. They too held that our standards are decided by what is immediately pleasing, as well as by the 'utilitarian' principle. No need was felt to appeal to religious beliefs to defend this system of ethics.

However, 19th. Century Utilitarianism had a number of shortcomings which, for a time, led to its falling out of favour. It had failed to distinguish between higher and lower pleasures. It did not define what it meant by 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. In the 20th. Century, Utilitarianism re-emerged with some of these defects remedied. The introduction of a 'felecific calculus' made it possible to distinguish between different kinds of pleasure, some approved, others not. Already Utilitarianism was being made subject to certain values. These did not grow out of the Utilitarian principle itself, but were imposed upon it to render it acceptable to a particular tradition in moral philosophy: that tradition which, along with Kant, held that some things are always right and others always wrong.

This helped somewhat to define in broad terms what was meant by 'the greatest happiness principle'. But this principle has never risen beyond sounding like a slogan for international co-operation.

If it is true that Hume's Intuitionism only made sense against a particular religious background, it may be more than coincidence that the general demise of early Utilitarianism kept pace with the decline of religious belief in Britain.

Hume's secular Intuitionism led to Logical Positivism, which insisted that his narrower definition of how beliefs are formed be adhered to strictly. The Principle of Verification as expounded by the Positivists would have satisfied Hume's definition of how beliefs proper are formed quite admirably. And yet Positivism as well was to fall out of favour, as the alarming truth sank in that it too did not conform to the Principle of Verification. It too was not a meaningful proposition. And, if even it was excluded, then how much else of what is good and meaningful in life was it setting aside? Hume had already anticipated this difficulty when he formulated the Naturalistic Fallacy. It can hardly be claimed that these attempts to build on Hume's 'secular Intuitionism' have been successful.

Conclusion.

Last Century Humean philosophy still met with a mixed reception. T.H. Green and T.H. Grose accused him of emptying morality of its contents. Because they were leading authorities on his works, their views carried a lot of influence. In the 20th. Century that attitude was to change, as Humean philosophy came to the centre of attention in British moral philosophy. N.K. Smith portrayed a much more credible picture of Hume, over against the other images of him which had gained acceptance on the Continent - such as the subjective idealist in the Kantian tradition. The extent of Francis Hutcheson's influence on him was being appreciated for the first time. E.C. Mossner did much valuable research as well, which uncovered

biographical material which had not previously been in circulation. Hume's 'secular Intuitionism' had not been the embarrassment for Smith and Mossner which it had been for Green and Grose. To their credit, they did not attempt to force it into a mould, but explained it very much along Hume's lines. They may have sought to modernize it and eliminate some of its more glaring weaknesses, without altering the underlying case. They believed that Hume's thinking does not end in scepticism, but proceeds to build a new world, based on how the human mind really functions. Smith and Mossner have been among a group of Humean scholars who have responded positively to the general outline of his philosophy. As modern ethical theories have failed, so this group has looked to Hume's system for their starting-point.

Secularists have built on what they imagine to have been Hume's secular Intuitionism, without asking if his Intuitionism was truly that. It is doubtful if Hume was ever satisfied that there can be a fully secular Intuitionism. That is why he must be regarded as not only a great British philosopher, but a great Intuitionist in the tradition of Shaftesbury and Hutcheson.

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Subject Index.

Abstract 49,53
Action 45,79
Aesthetics 19,24, 29, 37 (Artistic 67), (Arts 70), 72, 80
Africa 67
Ages 53
Affection 79 , (Benevolent affection82)
Anatomy 10,154,155, 185
Anglican Church 2
Antiquity 44,53,54,55,91, 106,159
Analysis 46, 182
Anarchists 56
Animal 69, 70
Annandale 193
Anthropological model 4,36,46,47,48,52,67,129,152
Architecture 23,71,146, 144
Approbation 67
Archaeology 5
Artifices 5 ,6
Astronomers 14
Action 4 ,7
Atheism 3,10,3 643,47,64,104,116,142,169
Author (intelligent 105), (of Nature 114), 116,127, 131, 140, 163

Benevolence 19, (b. Person 81), (universal b. 83)
Behaviour 48,54,76
Behaviourism 29,33
Beliefs 32,33,35,36,38,40,42,43,44,45,46,49,65,71,72, 75,77,80,137 (religious b. 150,156), 158,190,197
Beauty 66, 70

Bible 50 (biblical 52) 164,165,215
'Big Bang' 134
Blind Nature 54
Body 51,52,53,71,182
Brain 32,35,74,137,181
British 43,62,71,187,203
Bull-Unigenitus 73

Categorical Imperative 16,149
Calvinism 7,43,48,56, 162
Causation 132, 163
Cambridge Platonists 64
Cartesian 64
Census 3
Church of Scotland 18, 41,73,100,169,215
Church 14,
Church of England 19
Christian 41,47, 50,51,52, (Orthodoxy 55), (Intuitionism 63)
(beliefs 62,65,73,94) 129, 183, 198

Christianity 120 (evangelical 126)
Childhood 50
Children 57
'Cheerful disposition' 51, 128, 151
Charismatic 65
Civilized Man 54

Classicism 1,13, 200
Clerics 179
Clock-work motor 128
Continental Europe 10,36,38, 42,47,62, 84,
Cosmological Argument 130, 151,154,155,156,163

Causal Principle 13,14,26,29,31,48,52, 133
Church 162
'Common Sense' 16,43

Cognitive 44

Conception 37

Covenanters 41

Conscience 58,

Consciousness 46

Convictions 184

Common Grace 57

Cosmos 64

Creator 67, 142,151,152,165,217

Creation 128

Culture 52,55

Design Argument 3, 25, 106,116,141,144,148

Deity 154

Deism 10,11,14,18,19,26,57,62,66, 109,111,113,118,119
125,161

Divinity 51

Divine Revelation 33,68,

Doctor 35

Dualist 35

Dublin 42,66

Earth 46,53, 132

Economics 71

Education 34, ,39,40,42,45,46,49,50, 70, 80,

Edinburgh 7,9,160, (E. university 42,44,48,100) 191)

Elder (Church of Scotland) 41

Empiricism 10,31,37, ,48,54,72,135,147,149

Emotions 77

Emotivism 69

England 7,18,43,73,135
'Enduring sensation' 33,35
Enlightenment 48,72,193 (French 63,81,193) Scottish 210
Environment 54,69
Epicureans 51
Epistemology 24,29,72
Erastianism 18
Eschatological 52
Ethnological Argument 158,163
Ethics 23, 54,55
Ethical 62,71,73,79,82
Ethnic 56
Eternity 125
Experience 136
Experimental method 23, 211
Existentialist 51 (-ism 183)
Evil 44,69,79, 128,152,187
Evangelical 9, 214

Faculties 31,36,37,78
Faith 38,50,58,65,
Fanaticism 73
Falsehood 45
Felicific calculus 52, 180
Feelings 63
Freedom 72
Five Ways 130
Finite 36,37,120,126
First Cause 130
France 9,10,14
French Scepticism 9
Free-thinking 39,48

Freedom 72

Geology 46

Germany 179

General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 7,42,169

Glasgow 67 (Presbytery of, 69,99)(University of, 43)

Gnosticism 51

God 34,35,37,53,56,57, 66,67,68,77,83, 124, 133,142, 146, 155, 159,164,197

Good 44,81,114,152

Goodness 57,69,182

Greek 64,104

Grace 70

Gravity 82

'Greatest happiness principle' 180

Harmony 67

Happiness 69,81 (of the highest kind, 82)

Hedonistic 188

Heaven 53, 138

Heathens 56

Historical 55

Holy 53

Holland 73

Humanism 8,10,12

Humanity 53

Human (nature, 33,36,42,49,52), (spirit, 52,53,56), (species, 66), (nature, 67,69,80,72,80, 129, 190) (science of, 192) (body, 181)

Idolatry 102, 159

Ideas 32,35,36,44,75,

Idealism 150

Illness 35
Images 36,75
Imago Dei 70, ,77
Impression 32,39.47, 75, 125,154
Intuitions 70
Intuitionism 13,18,20,39, 43,44,46,47,48,50,52,53,57,58,62
64,65,66,67,68,71,77,79,81,83,84, 86,107,151,156,167,202
(Theistic, 74), (secular, 104, 129)
Industrial revolution 23,71, 128,210
Individual 187
Interactionist 35
Incarnation 38
Integrated personality 50
Inspiration 70
Injustice 79
Intorspection 9,58
Injustice 79
Irish 43
Infinite 36, 120 (divisibility, 125)
Italy 193

Jesus Christ 38, 150
Jansenism 73, 193
Jesuits 193
Jews 38
Justice 52,57, 179

King 3 8
Kirk 42
Kindly affection 68
Knowledge 67,70,71

Languages 82
'Law' 188
Lawyer 65
Latin 104
Linguistic philosophy 16
Literature 172,199
Liberal biblical theology 55
Life 56
Love (disinterested) 81
Logical Positivism 128,136,181
Lutheran scholarship 8

Matter 147,154
Mammals 23,33
Mathematics 30, 64, 123,131,141,147
Man 34, 51,53,56,64,65,66,68,69,71,78, 83,84, 113,149 158 (study of 183)
Materialist 33,
Machine 148
Magnanimity 52
Macrocosm 53
Medicine 23,71,
Medical science 187
Metallurgy 23,71
Metaphysics 28,53
Mechanistic 47
Mechanics 147
Memory 32,35,46,80
Mining 23,71
Mind 32,35,37,38,44, 50,53,63,64,65,66 (mind-body 74), 76, 80, 125,135,194
Moralist 53, 78,79,85

The Moral Argument 23, 54 99, 149, 154, 158, 163
Morals 66, 181
Morality 52, 67, 79
Morally aware 69
Moral convictions 48, 58, 70, 79
Moral feeling 70
Moral faculty 75, 185
Moral judgment 53, 67, 182
Moral Law 39, 150
Moral philosophy 17, 39, 183
Moral problems 183
The moral sciences 72
Moral standard 54 (abstract, 53)
Modesty 48
Mover 154
Motion 123, 155
Motive 68
Modern 69
Mythology 37
Mysticism (religious, 72)

Natural religion 2, 24, (religion of Nature, 73), 110 117 (Natural Theology, 149), 158
Naturalistic Fallacy 16, 78, 130
Navigation 23, 71
Nature 83, 117, 146, (Naturalism, 120)
Natural world 32, 57 (natural state, 129)
Naturalistic ethics 130
Nations 52 (national, 56)

Naturalness 70

Nantes, Edict of 73
Newtonian philosophy 17
'New, naturalistic world' 23,32,34,42, 47, 74
'Necessary connection' 16
'Necessary existence' 139
Nervous system 32, 75, 80
New Testament 52
Noble 57

Objective (moral standard 53), (propositions 65)
Obligation 79
Occasionalists 147
Old Testament 55 ,162
Omnipotence 141,153
Ontology 49, (argument 138,163)
Optimistic 51, 129,152
Opinion 58
Original sin 128
'Ought' and 'is' 4,17,
Oklahoma, University of 206 Baptist Univ. of 206
Palestine 38
Parish 41
Pain 44, 187
Passion 44, 66
Persecution 35
Perception (causal theory of) 33, perceptions 36
75, 125,135,146,155
Phenomenalism 75, 136
Philosophy of religion 88, 109,125,141,158,198,291
Philosophy 16, 23, 27,28,29,30,31,32,37 55,58,63,67,68
79,85, 124,151 (British 187), 190,198
Philosopher 39,43, 5971, (Christian 75), 140,179,189

Philosophes 63,71,73,84, 109,130
Physiology 23,29, 34,40,48,51,69,77,84, 183,187
Physics 122,132
Pietism 8,9
Platonism 14 (neo-Platonic 64)
Pleasure 44,52,67,179,187
Polytheism 93.,117
Politics 24,72
Presbyterian 8,9,12,13,40,41,42,58,209
'Proofs', Theistic 130
Privileges 42
Protestant 43,73
Providence 43,57,64
Presupposition 49,55,68
Primates 52
Prudence 52
Prayer 53
Psychology 136,185,187
Psychological 3,5, 24,26,27,28,29,30,31,34,45,46,47,48,49 (experimental 72), 75, 110,135
Pseudo-scientific 43
Puritans 7,211
Public interest 20,180,188 (good 67), (spirited action 68)

Rational 95, (rationality 53, 62,63,64)
Rationalism 3,24,39,45,79 (secular 72,81,85), (Continental 72), (empirical 72), (German 192), (atheistic 65)
Race 56, 57
Reasoning 50 (reason 8,31, 43,44,49, 63,65,69,72, 78,80 86)
Religious beliefs 34,36,37 48,49,55,70,72, 83,84, 158,196,202
Religion 39,40,64,83, 105,108,110(of Nature 120) 162

Red Cross 180

Recapitulation 46

Redemption 51

Revelation 55

Reformers 57,162

Relationships 72

Receptacle (theory of the universe) 124,143

Rights 42

'Right' 44,54,68, 77, 181

Roman Catholic 8, 73,210

Roman Empire 38

'Rules' (of morality) 79, 181

Sabbath 9, 41

Science/scientific 3,15, 23, 27,28,29,30,31,49,64,65,71, 72, 124,142,147,159 (empirical 149)

Scotland 43,69,193 (universities, 7), (education 7,8,16,34), (Reformation 7,57, (Enlightenment 17,71)

Scots Confession 161

Scepticism 10,13,36 42,43,44,65,78, 126,161,194

'Science of Man' 23, 63,

Scholars 50,55,

Scriptural 128,130

Scholasticism 162

Sentiment/alist 66,81

Sermon on the Mount 150

Selfishness 20,81

Sensation 32

Sense organs 32,76, (senses 36,46,75,122)

Sensitive 44,63

Secular 202 (secularist 38,) (secular Intuitionist 62,71,73, 76,81,83)

Superstition 217

Society 55,70,
Spirit 53, 188
Soul 33,53,69,155,184,187 (s.-searching 41,58,)
(subsistence of 52)
Spiritual 34,51,54, 58, 68,69 (s.- Intuitionism, 62)
Space 133, (outer s. 121), (space and time 123,124)
Starry heavens 39
Subjectivism 57,65, (subjective 71,135)

Taste 66
Ten Commandments 68,77
Teleology 103, (t. Argument 116,117,141,147) 152

Television 122
Theist 87,140,153 (Theism 10,18,25, 33,34,43, 54,62,
65,88,89,105,110,116,126,140,144,149, 155,160,174,196,201,209)

Theology 43,56,64,83, 124,131,153 (natural t.
193), (theologian 23,57,65,140)
Thomistic 52
Thessalonians 53
Truth 45,66,79
Transcendence 38, 122,147

Ulster 43
United Nations 180
Universal 39, 56,67,82,158
Universe 124,128,132,148,159,179,187
Utilitarianism 44,52,69,

Values 54,56, (v. judgments 50)
Verification principle 138
Virtue 19, 52, 55,56,57,68,78, 82, 129

Vivacity 52

Vices 57,70, 129

Watchmaker 19

Warfare 23,71
Westminster Confession of Faith 214
Will 82

Wisdom 55

World 54, (w.- view 58,63,)

'Wrong' 44,54,68, 77

Writers 53

PROPER NAMES.

Adam Smith 71

Ayer, A.J. 28,32,116,142,145,161,179,189

Anaxagoras 25,127

Anselm 123

Aquinas, Thomas 25,142

Aristotle 121,123,132,133,149,215(A. philosophy 8,14,16,23,29, 74,132).

Augustine 64

Bayle, Pierre 10,14,63,121,123

Baron 10

Barnes, Jonathan 141

Bacon 20,23,71

Bentham 20,84,179

Berkeley 10,76,78,107,120,131,135,146,183,188,189,201

Boston, Thomas 8
Boswell 166
Boyle 147

Bricke 26,32,35

Brown, John 48
Brodie, Professor, Glasgow University 86

Butler 23,82,107,108,110,120,150,173,179,188,193

Campbell, T.D. 17,81

Carmichael, Gershom 17,43

Calvin, John 8,164,210

Camic, Charles 211

Capaldi N. 63,123,131

Cicero 1,9,13,14,55, 67,68,98

Clarke 9,140

Cleanthes 113,118,129,144,157,165,196,201
Craig, Edward 215
Copernicus 132

Cumberland 20

Descartes 23,43,66,71, 131,145

Despanter 41

Demea 112,118,127,156,199

Einstein 26,124

Elliot, Gilbert 169,174

Epicurus 153

Faustus 11,12

Fowler 20

Fontenelle 14

Galileo 8,14

Gardiner, Helen 11

Gaskin 140,161

Greig 10, 110, 160, 174

Green, T.H. 46,69, 125,183,195,197, 202

Grose, T.H. 69, 186,195,199,202

Hamilton (Lady) Elizabeth 194
Haakonsen, Kund 216
Henderson, Alexander 7, 213

Hermippus 200

Hegel 189

Hobbes, Thomas 20,

Home (Mrs.) 41, (Rev. George) 41, (Henry) 193

Hume, David 1 - 203

Hutcheson, Francis 1,3,9,13,17,18,23,40,42,43,49,53,62, 65,

67,68,69,70,72,73,76, 80,86, 107, 112, 120, 137, 145, 179, 188, 189, 202, 203

Huxley, J. 116

Jones, Peter 13,14, 100

Juvenal 54

Kant, Emmanuel 16,39,49, 53, 116, 134, 126, 147, 151, 158, 163, 179, 192

Knox, John 162, 210
Kuypers, Mary Schaw 18, 135, 137

Laird 10,63, 66,67,68

Leibniz 19, 131, 147, 152

Leechman 66

Lively, J.F. 63

Locke, John 9, 23,24 43,73,120, 135, 146, 187

Louis XIV 73

Luther 7, 164

Malebranche 10,16,67 Mallet (Mrs.)10, Mandeville 20,23
Marlowe, Christopher 11
McIntyre 8,41
MacDonald, (Sir) James 2
Merrill, Kenneth R. 206
Melville, Andrew 7, 213
Mill 149
Milton 34,107
More

Moore, G.E. 130, 181

Mossner, E.C. 8, 88, 120, 160, 168, 173, 189, 192, 194

Newton, (Sir) Isaac 1,10,14,15,19,23,26,28,31,64,71,73, 100, 106, 116, 123, 131, 142, 164, 185, 201

Noxon 24, 25,28,29,31,40, 143

Ockham 16

Passmore 10,28, ,30 32,39,47

Paton, H.J. 49,53

Pamphil us 198, 200

Philocles 19

Philo 54, 109,118,129,144,156, 165, 196,197,

Pike, Nelson 173,201

Plato (Platonic) 131

Prichard, H.A. 181

Pufendorf 216

Pythagoras 124, 131

Quensel 73

Reid 192

Richardson, John 150

Rousseau, J.J. 19,57, 70,72,77

Ross, W.D. 181

Scotus, Duns 87, 124

Schlick 181

Seneca 197

Sextus Empiricus 44

Shaftesbury, Anthony, Ashley, Cooper (Lord) 14,18,19,20,23,40,

62, 66,67,70,73,81, 88, 107, 115, 172, 188, 203, 209

Smith, Adam 169

Spinoza 19,23,71,83,131

Stuart, Professor (Lancaster University) 87

Torrance, (Rev. Dr. Prof.) Thomas 26, 123

Voltaire 73

Warnock, G.J. 181

Wendel, Francois 210

Wester, Donald G. 206

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